

Virtue Ethics in the Parable of the Good Samaritan : Shaping Christian Character

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**VIRTUE ETHICS IN THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN
SHAPING CHRISTIAN CHARACTER**

**A Thesis Submitted in Total Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the S.T.L. Degree
from the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry (Weston Jesuit)**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: INFORMED BY THE GOOD SAMARITAN'S ACTIONS	4
I. THE TEXT	5
II. EXEGETICAL APPROACH	7
A. TEXTUAL CRITICISM	7
B. FORM CRITICISM	8
1. Literary Structure	9
2. Literary Genre	12
C. CLOSE READING	14
D. SYNOPTIC ANALYSIS	26
E. NARRATIVE CRITICISM	27
1. The Narrator	28
2. The Closure of the Narrative	29
3. Scenes	30
4. The Plot	31
5. The Characters	35
6. The Narrative Time	37
7. The Narrative Voice	38
8. The Role of the Text and the Role of the Reader.	38
CONCLUSIONS	39
 CHAPTER TWO: ANTHROPOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE GOOD SAMARITAN PARABLE	 44
I. TWO DIFFERENT REACTIONS	46
A. A PRIEST AND A LEVITE	46
1. Jewish Purity Code	47
2. A Negation of the Subject (an "I-It" Relationship)	48
B. A SAMARITAN	49
1. Recognition and Transformation (an "I-Thou")	

Relationship)	50
2. Compassion: The Experience of God in the Human Being.	51
II. ANTHROPOLOGICAL REFLECTION	52
A. PARADOX AND “SAVING CATHEGORIES”	52
B. <i>IMAGE OF GOD</i>	59
CONCLUSIONS	61
 CHAPTER THREE: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE GOOD	
SAMARITAN PARABLE	63
I. THE NOTION OF <i>EPIKEIA</i> IN THE CATHOLIC TRADITION	64
A. <i>EPIKEIA</i> IN GREEK PHILOSOPHERS	64
B. AQUINAS’S UNDERSTANDING OF <i>EPIKEIA</i>	67
C. MODERN MORAL THEOLOGIANS ON <i>EPIKEIA</i>	70
D. QUESTIONS OF USING THE VIRTUE OF <i>EPIKEIA</i> IN THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN	72
E. GOOD SAMARIAN’S ACTION AS <i>EPIKEIA</i>	84
II. JOHANN BAPTIST METZ’S CATEGORY OF SPIRITUALITY	87
A. <i>MYSTICISM OF OPEN EYES</i>	90
B. SPIRITUALITY AS <i>PRAXIS</i>	95
C. THEOLOGY OF SUFFERING	98
1. Subject and <i>Praxis</i>	99
2. “To Whom am I Neighbor?”	100
CONCLUSIONS	101
GENERAL CONCLUSIONS	106
BIBLIOGRAPHY	111
ANNEXES	120

“For I am the Lord your God;
sanctify yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.”
(Lv 11:44)

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”
(Lk 6:36)

“[...] love is the fulfilling of the law”
(Rom 13:10)

INTRODUCTION

Holy Scripture throughout history has been a source of inspiration for human beings. One important theme that emerges from Scripture is the notion of mercy, which is a capital virtue in the gospel of Luke. The Gospel according to St. Luke has traditionally merited the title “The Gospel of Mercy” and contains parables such as “The Parable of the Good Samaritan” and “The Parable of the Prodigal Son,” which are unique to Luke’s gospel. These parables highlight the divine merciful actions of a Samaritan and of a father respectively; they show us a path of divine mercy through concrete actions. This thesis will focus on the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37).

In contemporary times, we see many people living in dehumanizing situations. These people are hoping for someone to take the risk of helping them, perhaps through merciful actions. In this regard, the parable of the Good Samaritan has to say something to us. The parable portrays a merciful Samaritan, who stopped his journey to help a half-dead man because he had been moved with pity toward him. The Samaritan, through merciful actions, restores the human dignity of the anonymous man on the dangerous Jericho road. The parable clearly reveals virtues such as compassion, mercy, solidarity, generosity, hospitality, etc. Among these virtues, *epikeia* appears to be absent, but remarkably, this virtue takes place in this parable. *Epikeia* is one of the central themes of this Lucan parable, which is the interpretation of the law and its fulfillment. According to the parable of the Good Samaritan, the thesis discusses two criteria for the interpretation of the law which channel human actions. In this regard, human actions toward people who are waiting for help will depend on how we interpret the law. Furthermore, it will depend on our capacity to open our eyes to those suffering people who are living in dehumanizing situations.

This thesis seeks to find some of the distinguishing elements that could help shape our Christian character based on: 1) the parable of the Good Samaritan; 2) a relational anthropology; 3) the notion of *epikeia*; and, 3) Johann Baptist Metz's spirituality. The thesis will use the virtue of *epikeia* to bridge Scripture and ethics. Even more, it will try to integrate virtue ethics with spirituality.

This thesis explores the relation among Scripture, moral theology, and spirituality. The focus questions are:

“Could we use Metz in conjunction with the parable of the Good Samaritan, to help illustrate his (Metz) notion of a spirituality that is lived out in a particular concrete situation?” If so, following Metz's spirituality, with its stress on obedience to God and response to human suffering, “Can we use the parable of the Good Samaritan to illustrate a proper “spirituality-grounded” response coming out of attention to the Other, which in turn could help broaden our understanding of the notion of *epikeia* to use it in situations beyond that of correcting or perfecting defects in “law,” but to integrate this notion of *epikeia* with the practice of spirituality?” This approach to *epikeia* would fit better with a virtue-based ethics and integrate this virtue ethics with spirituality -thus, helping to bridge the divide between spirituality and ethics. This approach would also help show how Scripture can be used to “perfect the discipline of moral theology” (see *Optatam totius* n. 16), especially in relation to the formation of our Christian character.

The thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter one examines the parable of the Good Samaritan according to some exegetical and hermeneutical approaches. This chapter is divided into two parts. Part one presents the text in question, the parable of the Good Samaritan. Part two examines Luke 10:25-37 through the lens of some diachronic approaches such as “Textual

Criticism,” “Form Criticism,” and “Close Reading.” These approaches should help us to complement the “Narrative Criticism” section in order to understand how the text informs its audience. This section is based on the method of Daniel Maguerat and Yvan Bourquin. Chapter one attempts to unveil the main characteristics of this Lucan parable, and answer the following question “What is the novelty in this Lucan parable?”

Chapter two focuses on a relational anthropology that emerges from this Lucan parable. This chapter is divided into two parts. Part one discusses, according to the different characters that Luke 10:25-37 portrays, two kinds of relationships that are important in Johann Baptist Metz’s theology: an “I-Thou” relationship and an “I-It” relationship. This part examines the purity codes in the time of Jesus in contrast to the double commandment of love. The second part examines two categories bearing on salvation: *otherness* and *affinity*. These categories derive from Christological perspective of liberation theologian Jon Sobrino. This part tries to explain how these categories operate in the parable. Finally, part two presents the doctrine of the *image of God* in order to reflect on the human condition and dignity.

Chapter three presents two parts. Part one examines the virtue of *epikeia* by focusing on the perspectives of Aristotle, Saint Thomas Aquinas in contrast to Francisco de Suarez, and some modern moral theologians such as Josef Fuchs, John Mahoney, Charles E. Curran, and Klaus Demmer. Through these perspectives the thesis attempts to explain how *epikeia* operates in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Part two presents the perspective on spirituality of Johann Baptist Metz based on the categories of memory, narrative, and solidarity. This part tries to explain how *poverty of spirit* and *mysticism of the open eyes* work in the parable in conjunction with the virtue of *epikeia*.

CHAPTER ONE

INFORMED BY THE GOOD SAMARITAN'S ACTIONS

In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37), a priest and a Levite on the Jericho road see a man suffering, but they do not help him; they go by without stopping. Both the priest and the Levite are supposed to be religiously upright, “true believers.” It seems to be that their piety, their fidelity to their purity code, and their understanding of the term “neighbor” blind them. They appear to love God, but they fail to love their actual neighbor. Jesus praises the Good Samaritan who stops and helps the mugged man. As Jesus relates it (see Lk 10:33), the Samaritan saw the stricken man’s need and had compassion. But “Why do those “professional believers” fail to see the needy man?” “Could it be that their piety and especially their purity code distracts them from the real world?” “Could it be their understanding of the term ‘neighbor’ limited their ethical tasks?” “Who were the Samaritans?” This chapter attempts to answer these questions.

Luke 10:25-37 brings to us a model of action that includes the capacity to humanize and to reconcile the seemingly irreconcilable and dehumanized. In this way, moving from exclusion to inclusion overcomes divisions and allows us to start walking together. Thus, the parable of the Good Samaritan is inviting us to “go and do likewise” (v. 37), asking ourselves not only “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” (v. 25), but rather “What kind of person should I be through my actions?” or “To whom am I neighbor?”

Chapter one has two parts. Part one presents the text in question, Luke 10:25-37. Part two, “Exegetical Approach,” presents an exegetical and hermeneutical approach to the parable of the Good Samaritan. This part intends to examine the text in its context and also attempts to unveil what the text wants to communicate to its audience. Hence, part two is divided into five

sections. The first three sections explore some diachronic approaches in order to have a better understanding of the *Sitz im Leben* of this Lucan parable. These approaches focus on the author of the text and the author's intention. For this reason, Section "A" presents a "Textual Criticism," which attempts to determine, as nearly as possible, what the original Greek text was and how possible variants could affect the interpretation of this parable. Section "B," "Form Criticism," analyzes "Literary Structure" and "Literary Genre." This section should help us to understand some relevant literary features in the structure of this parable. Section "C," "Close Reading," examines the meaning of some words and expressions in their historical context. Next, Section "D" presents a "Synoptic Analysis" in order to highlight the main differences among Luke 10:25-28, Matthew 22:34-40, and Mark 12:28-34. Luke 10:29-37 occurs only in Luke's gospel. Finally, Section "E" examines this Lucan parable through the lens of narrative criticism, which focuses on the reader and how the text is able to engage its audience and transform them. This section will be supplemented by previous diachronic approaches. To conclude this first chapter, I will try to answer these questions: "What is newness?" "Why it is important?" and "How are the audience and readers informed by this Lucan parable?" I will use the results of the "Exegetical Approach" part to answer these questions.

I. THE TEXT

The authorship of the third Gospel is attributed to Luke, who has written his Gospel for a Gentile Christian audience represented by his addressee (Theophilus). The account presents a "historian" who has investigated and is well informed about the Christ-event (Lk 1:3). Luke is a believer who informs his audience that the teaching of the early Christian community is based on the teaching of Jesus. The third Gospel is dated around 80-85 A.D.¹

¹ Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX)*, vol. 28 of *The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), 55.

The Gospel of Luke characteristically teaches a message of universal salvation addressed to all people (Jews and non-Jews). In this sense, the parable of the Good Samaritan is entirely in harmony with this general feature of the third Gospel, teaching that righteousness and salvation are not the exclusive privilege of the Jews.

The general outline of Luke's Gospel presents eight major sections:² 1) a prologue (1: 1-4); 2) infancy narrative (1: 5-2:52); 3) the preparation for the public ministry of Jesus (3:1-4:13); 4) the Galilean ministry of Jesus (3:1-9:50); 5) the travel account, Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (9:51-19:27); 6) the ministry of Jesus in Jerusalem (19:28-21:38); 7) passion narrative (22:1-23:56a); and , 8) resurrection narrative (23:56b-24:53). Luke 10:25-37 is placed in the fifth Lucan Gospel section and is divided in two parts: the first relates the Lawyer's Question (10:25-28) and the second relates the Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:29-37), which is found only in Luke.

The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible presents us with the following translation of Luke 10:25-37:³

25	Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"
26	He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?"
27	He answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."
28	And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live."
29	But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
30	Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.
31	Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.
32	So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.
33	But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity [compassion].

² Cf. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX)*, 134.

³ Hereafter all scriptural quotes will be taken from *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1989).

34	He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.
35	The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.'
36	Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"
37	He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

The text's boundaries are delimited by the following: characters (the lawyer and Jesus), themes (eternal life, compliance with the Law, and neighbor), and the introductory Lucan formula *kai idou*. This passage is placed after the disciples had returned from the mission to the towns and cities of Galilee (10:1-20) and before the Martha and Mary story (10:38-42).

II. EXEGETICAL APPROACH

The Good Samaritan parable, at first reading, seems to be easy to understand, but actually it is complex because of its literary structure, the sociocultural meaning of some of the words, and the dangers of the area between Jerusalem and Jericho.

Next, I will present an exegetical and hermeneutical approach based on some diachronic tools such as textual criticism, form criticism, and close reading in order to achieve a better comprehension of the text in its context.

A. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

This section seeks to establish the original text, insofar as this is possible, that can serve as the basis for our study and reflection on the parable of the Good Samaritan. In this regard, according to Metzger, Luke 10:25-37 does not present important variants.⁴ However, it is possible to find some disagreements in verse 32. Thus, the participle *genomenos* ("present") is read by the

⁴ Cf. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 4th rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Biblegesellschaft: United Bible Societies, 1994), 128.

following manuscripts \mathfrak{P}^{45} A D and most minuscules. The participle *elthon* (“coming”)⁵ is read by the following manuscripts \mathfrak{P}^{75} \mathfrak{N}^c B Ξ and many minuscules. Both participles are present in C E G H K M S U V W Γ Δ Θ Λ . For Metzger:

it is difficult to decide whether the longer text, being redundant, was shortened by copyists, some of whom deleted γενόμενος and others ἐλθών, or whether the longer text is the result of conflation. In view of the collocation γενόμενοι κατά in Act 27.7, a minority of the Committee preferred the reading γενόμενος κατά as a Lukan expression; at the same time, in view of the divided attestation for and against ἐλθών, they preferred to enclose that word within square brackets.⁶

Most of the English version bibles do not translate the participle *genomenos*. However, Nestle-Aland⁷ includes both participles, yet *genomenos* is presented in square brackets (see Annex 2: Different Translations of Luke 10:32). According to Plummer,⁸ to use both participles would not be redundant. Rather, it would help to give a better understanding about the different actions of the priest and the Levite in verse 32. In this way Plummer says “the Levite is made to be more heartless than the priest, whom he seems to have been following. The priest saw and passed on; but the Levite came up to him quite close, saw, and passed on.”⁹ Finally, the disagreement about the variant in verse 32 would make little difference, and so is not important to understand the parable of the Good Samaritan.

B. FORM CRITICISM

Form criticism helps us to analyze and to unveil the structure and the literary genre present in this Lucan passage.

⁵ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)*, vol. 28A of *The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 887.

⁶ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 4th rev. ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Biblegesellschaft: United Bible Societies, 1994), 128.

⁷ Cf. Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland et al., eds. *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993, c1979), 193.

⁸ Cf. Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, 5th ed. (London; New York: T&T Clark, 1942), 287-289.

⁹ Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, 287.

1. Literary Structure

Luke 10:25-37 starts with the formula *kai idou*, which according to Fitzmyer is a typical Lucan Hebraism expression, found in the third Gospel twenty-six times.¹⁰ Fitzmyer comments: “A genuinely problematic feature in Luke’s Greek, however, is the use of so-called Hebraisms. There is no evidence that Luke knew any Hebrew; hence the source of them is puzzling.”¹¹

A literary approach shows that Luke 10: 25-37 is divided into two dialogues between a lawyer and Jesus. The first dialogue (“A”) focuses on the question of eternal life (v. 25-28) and the second (“B”) on the Good Samaritan’s actions as a neighbor (v. 29-37). The two dialogues have similarities in their internal structure: 1) each dialogue opens with a brief prologue that shows the intentions of the lawyer (v. 25a.29a); 2) the lawyer begins the dialogue and introduces the theme (v. 25b.29b); 3) in each dialogue, Jesus answers and gives instructions to the lawyer on what to do, and the instructions close the dialogue (v. 28b.37b); 4) there are two questions and two answers, which are as follow:¹²

DIALOGUE	v.	
B	25a	Prologue (a lawyer stood up to test Jesus)
	25b	Lawyer’s question (eternal life)
	26	Jesus’ question (reply to lawyer’s question)
	27	Lawyer’s answer (double commandment of love)
	28	Jesus’ answer (do this and you will live)
A	29a	Prologue (the lawyer wanting to justified himself)
	29b	Lawyer’s question (neighbor)
	30-35	Jesus answer (Good Samaritan parable)
	36	Jesus question (who is neighbor?)
	37a	Lawyer’s answer (the Samaritan is neighbor)
	37b	Jesus’ answer (“Go and do likewise”)

¹⁰ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX)*, 121.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 118.

¹² Cf. Kenneth E. Bailey, *Poet & Peasant: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables in Luke* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1983), 74.

A detailed analysis of the internal structure of Jesus' story (v. 30a-35) in dialogue "B" unveils a series of inverted stanzas:¹³

	v.	Narrative	
	30a	"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho	
1	30b	and fell into the hands of robbers , who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.	COME DO GO
2	31	Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.	COME DO GO
3	32	So likewise a Levite , when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.	COME DO GO
4	33	But a Samaritan while traveling came near him and when he saw him he was moved with pity [compassion].	COME DO DO
3'	34a	He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them.	COME DO DO
2'	34b	Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him..	DO DO DO
1'	35	The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.'	DO DO DO

Luke 10:30b-35 reveals a parallelism that presents a chiasmic construction. According to Bailey this will be a typical "parabolic ballad" where "the sayings of Jesus often employ a series of three-stanzas."¹⁴ In the parable we find not only that each strophe introduces a new scene, but that, remarkably, the stanzas are inverted. As we see above both the priest and the Levite practice COME-DO-GO while the Samaritan practices COME-DO-DO. In this sense, Bailey says, "The priest was of sufficient [religious] rank to be known to have been riding, and could have taken the man to the inn. The Levite being of a lesser [religious] rank, might not have been riding, but

¹³ Cf. Bailey, *Poet & Peasant*, 72-73.

¹⁴ Cf. Bailey, *Poet & Peasant*, 72.

he could at least have rendered first aid. The Samaritan in the second half reverses the actions of the first three stanzas [the robbers, the priest, and the Levite].”¹⁵

The chiastic construction in Luke 10:30b-35 shows a concentric structure (1-2-3 - 4 - 3’-2’-1’) whose central description appears in v. 33, where the Lucan Jesus portrays a Samaritan who was moved with pity (compassion) when he saw the abandoned man. As we know, neither the priest nor the Levite helped the mugged man. On the contrary they saw him and passed by. Afterward, the Samaritan reverses the order of the first three moments. Therefore, the chiasmus shows a change in the plot and indicates a transforming action. The Samaritan who had been moved with pity performed a series of actions in favor of the half-dead man, and when he leaves him in the care of the innkeeper, he promises to return (v. 35). The Samaritan, in the second part (3’-2’-1’), reverses the actions of the first three “small units” (1-2-3). Therefore, by using this concentric structure the narrator increases the intensity of the plot in each successive stanza and presents significant changes in the tale.

I would like to highlight the last strophe because it describes the Samaritan’s actions, which restore the human dignity of the man who had been mugged and abandoned by the robbers.¹⁶

	The robbers (v. 30)		The Samaritan (v. 35)
1	stripped him,	1’	took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper
	beat him,		o take care of him
	went away, leaving him half-dead. (and will not return)		left him cared for and promised to come back and to repay the innkeeper for whatever more he might spend

The last stanza shows how the Samaritan’s actions operate in parallel to the robbers’ actions in order to restore the human dignity of the mugged man.

¹⁵ Cf. Bailey, *Poet & Peasant*, 72.

¹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 73.

Thus, Luke 10:25-37 shows a very carefully crafted literary structure that works to help our comprehension as readers and audience of this Lucan text.

2. Literary Genre

Luke 10:25-37 is placed near the beginning of Luke's narrative about Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51-19-27). In this section we find many parables that use simple word-pictures as well as imaginative language; instead of using a concept, the storyteller uses images (that are associated with Semitic language). In this regard, Marguerat affirms, "the biblical language captures both the reader's attention and imagination through images."¹⁷

The lawyer's question in v. 29b is answered by the Lucan Jesus through word-pictures of a man who had been assaulted and who then is assisted only by the Samaritan. Thus, the images presented by the Lucan Jesus become a narrative.¹⁸

In Luke 10:30-35 the comparative particle "as" is absent. All characters are based on the lawyer's question (v. 29b). The Samaritan becomes a neighbor (v. 37a) because of his actions, which unveil the expression of love. All the Samaritan's actions (the images presented by the storyteller) become a unit, a metaphor.¹⁹ The Lucan Jesus does not say the Samaritan was merciful, but simply describes him with word-pictures and images. Let us note here that the Samaritan is not compared with Jesus or the Father through the comparative particle "as." However, the Lucan Jesus uses the verb pity (*splanchnizomai*) to reveal the interior attitude of the Samaritan. Afterward, it will be the lawyer who, having heard both the story about the Samaritan and Jesus' question (v. 30a-36), says "the Samaritan was neighbor because of his merciful actions" (see v. 37a).

¹⁷ Cf. Daniel Marguerat, *Parábola* (Navarra: Verbo Divino, 1994), 9.

¹⁸ "A narrative simply tells a story. Usually it includes at least a setting (where the events occurred), a plot (or at least a tension and the resolution of that tension), and characterization of the actors." (Tucker M. Gene, *Form Criticism of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia : Fortress Press, c1971), 25.)

¹⁹ Cf. Marguerat, *Parábola*, 14.

According to Marguerat, the metaphor impresses the readers because of its surprising effect.²⁰ Thus, the Lucan audience would perhaps have expected the third character in the story to be an Israelite layman, but they found a Samaritan instead. The Samaritan surprises the audience not only because of his compassion, but also because the popular narratives of that time usually had the following logical sequence: a priest - a Levite - an Israelite layman.²¹ The Lucan Jesus shocked his audience by using the sequence: a priest - a Levite - a Samaritan. Thus, the storyteller presents us with a “parable-metaphor,” which is unusual and bizarre.²² In this regard, Aletti points out that the Lucan parables keep the flavor of the unheard, and the enigmatic; the reader cannot manipulate the images through concepts.²³

In Luke 10:30-35 the intrigue begins when the storyteller relates an event on the road between Jericho and Jerusalem, which was well-known to the Jews of that time; it was a highly dangerous road as I will describe below.

The parable of the Samaritan is simple; it shows a great economy of words and avoids superfluous descriptions; it is clear and credible; moreover, there is no duality scene. The parable captures the attention of its audience and challenges them by offering a paradigm of behavior.

According to Marshall, Luke 10:30-35

shows Lucan vocabulary and style. Its motifs are to be understood only against the background of Lucan theology in which the Samaritans as keepers of the law occupy a position between Israel and the gentiles and form the link between them in the spread of the gospel. Further, the parable belongs inextricably to its Lucan context; it is incomprehensible without vs. 36f. and 29, and the latter verse arises out of the situation in vs. 25-28; it follows that the whole section (vs. 25-37) is a Lucan redactional composition [source “L”].²⁴

²⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 15.

²¹ Cf. Michael Gourgues, “The priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan Revisited: A Critical Note on Luke 10:31-35,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 117/4 (1998): 712-713.

²² Cf. Marguerat, *Parábola*, 16.

²³ Cf. Jean-Nöel Aletti, *El Arte de Contar a Jesucristo: Lectura Narrativa del Evangelio de Lucas* (Sígueme: Salamanca, 1992), 132.

²⁴ I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1978), 446.

Thus, we have a parable that is unique because of its structure, vocabulary, and style. Even more, it shows a Samaritan who, in keeping with Samaritans being keepers of the law, fulfills God's double commandment of love.

C. CLOSE READING

This section analyzes some important words, questions, and phrases in order to have a better understanding of this Lucan pericope.

Luke 10:25

- **A lawyer:** According to Bratcher²⁵ the lawyer (*nomikos*) was a man qualified to interpret the Scriptures, especially the Pentateuch. In Matthew and Luke *nomikos* is often used for Jewish leaders concerned about the administration and understanding of the Law (see Mt 22:35; Lk 7:30; 14:3).²⁶
- **What must I do to inherit eternal life?:**²⁷ The question shows that the lawyer saw his salvation as based on human actions and merits obtained by observance of the Mosaic Law. Here the question not only focuses on salvation instead of the greatest commandment of the Jewish Law (see Mt 22:36-39; Mk 12:28-31), but also reveals that the lawyer was a Pharisee and not a Sadducee who denied the resurrection. In this sense, the lawyer's question about eternal life, according to Bratcher, refers to the future life in the Messianic age.²⁸ The lawyer's question is not a theoretical one about the law, but a practical one regarding fulfillment of the law in the present time. In this regard, Plummer points out, the question "Which is the great commandment in the law?" (Mk 12:28-32; Mt 22:35-40) is precarious, but perhaps ought not to

²⁵ Cf. Robert G. Bratcher, *A Translator's Guide to the Gospel of Luke* (London; New York: United Bible Societies, c1982), 183.

²⁶ Gutbrod, "Nomikos," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans., Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans, c1985), 655.

²⁷ This question is concerned with human actions; therefore, it implies deontological and teleological moral systems rather than virtue ethics.

²⁸ Cf. Bratcher, *A Translator's Guide to the Gospel of Luke*, 183.

be set aside as impossible. There the question is theological and speculative; here [Lk 10:25] it is practical.”²⁹ Regarding the lawyer’s question, Plummer adds: “The tense implies that by the performance of some one thing eternal life can be secured. What heroic act must be performed, or what great sacrifice made? The form of question involves an erroneous view of eternal life and its relation to this life.”³⁰

Luke 10:26

■ ***What is written in the law? What do you read there?:*** Jesus’ reply refers to the Law and the lawyer’s understanding of it. According to Jeremias, the verb *anaginosko* does not mean “to read” but “to recite.”³¹ Therefore, the question of Jesus should be understood as: “How do you recite?,” which implies a daily recitation such as regular prayer.

Luke 10:27

■ ***You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself:*** The lawyer’s answer joins together two parts of the Pentateuch, the first comes from Deuteronomy 6:5 which is part of the *Shema* (the *Shema*, a Jewish daily prayer, was a fundamental passage in Jewish life and worship at home, in the synagogue, and in the temple³²) and the second from Leviticus 19:18. The first says “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” Deuteronomy presents “heart,” “soul,” and “might/strength,” but Luke adds “mind.” These four dimensions embrace the whole human being; it means that we are called to love fully and unconditionally as the one being that we are. The second text says “You shall not

²⁹ Alfred Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, 5th ed. (London; New York: T&T Clark, 1942), 283.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 284.

³¹ Cf. Joachim Jeremias, *Abba y el Mensaje Central del Nuevo Testamento*, 6th ed., trans., Alfonso Ortiz et al. (Salamanca: Sígueme, 2005), 82.

³² Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke: New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Eerdmans: Michigan, 1997), 428.

take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord.” Hence, through the lawyer’s answer, Luke unifies the two love commandments, love God and love your neighbor (Dt 6:5; Lev 19:18), showing that one needs the other and become a single commandment.

The lawyer’s answer links a theological truth to practical and ethical tasks. Luke presents both theological and an anthropological issues. Hence, it is not possible to love God without loving his image, humankind. A later chapter (Chapter two) will present an anthropological reflection based on the double commandment of love.

Luke 10:28b

■ ***do this, and you will live:*** Jesus’ answer is not theoretical, it refers to a practice. Here the verb “to live,” is connected with the question in Luke 10:25. The expression “do this” is a present active imperative; it therefore means “‘continually do this,’ not merely do it once for all.”³³

Luke 10:29b

■ ***And who is my neighbor?:***³⁴ The lawyer’s question implies an unclear understanding of the meaning of neighbor (*plesion*). The term *plesion* was a very controversial one, at the time; people used to understand its meaning in different ways. In this regard, Fichtner points out, “[the noun neighbor] reflects the range of possible dealings from the ‘friend’ of the king to stereotyped use in a phrase like ‘one another.’” Thus it covers the friend, lover, companion, neighbor, or

³³ Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, 285.

³⁴ If we considered that this question must be understood as “To whom I am neighbor?,” then this question is concerned not only with human actions, but also with the person herself. The question is person-oriented thus it implies virtue ethics. human actions; therefore, it implies deontological and teleological moral systems rather than virtue ethics.

fellow human being.”³⁵ Inasmuch, as the noun *plesion* involves human relationship I agree that “the word is a significant one in ethical discussions.”³⁶

For Fichtner, the noun *plesion* is related to the Hebrew term *rēaʿ* ‘ in the Septuagint. Its original and fundamental meaning has the sense, “to have dealings with someone” (see. Prov. 13, 20; 28, 7).³⁷ However, there is a whole list of different meanings of *plesion*, including the following: “friend” (see 1 Chr. 27:13; Dt. 13:7; 2 Sm. 13:3; Mi. 7:5; Ps. 35:14; Prov. 14:20; 18:24; Job 2:11; and so on); “lover” (see Jer. 3:1, 20; Hos. 3:1); “companion” (see Job 30:29; Prov. 17:17); often more generally “fellow-man,” the person encountered in daily life (see Prov. 6:1, 3; 18:17; 25:8; 26:19); and “another” (see 1 Sm. 28:17; 2 Sm. 12:11).³⁸ In general in the Septuagint, the term *rēaʿ* ‘ refers to a person who belongs to Israel, who is linked to Yahweh and His commandments.³⁹

Leviticus 19:16-18 contains the commandment of love where *rēaʿ* ‘ refers to people who belong to Israel. Hence, the term “neighbor” is applied to “fellow-members of the covenant or the community who share in the election and the covenant and the implied duties and rights.”⁴⁰ According to Leviticus 19:18 the commandment to love one’s neighbor involves the members of Yahweh’s covenant. Leviticus 19:34 goes beyond this; here the commandment to love your neighbor includes the “aliens who reside with you” which means the people who dwell in the land (see Lev 19:34b; Dt 10:19). Nonetheless, “What would have happened with the people who travel (as the anonymous man does on the Jericho road) without dwelling there?” They are not considered as neighbors, and so they are excluded since the law refers to specific “legal

³⁵ Fichtner, “Plesion,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume*, 872.

³⁶ Greeven, “Plesion,” in *Loc. Cit.*

³⁷ Cf. Fichtner, “Plesion,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. VI (Ile–P), eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans., Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964-c1974), 312.

³⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 312-313.

³⁹ Cf. Fichtner, “Plesion,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. VI (Ile–P), 312.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 314-315.

persons.” Regarding travelers, the rights and duties are focused only on hospitality. Therefore, the use of *rēa* ‘ (neighbor) in the commandment of love makes possible both restriction on the one side and extension on the other. Later Jewish interpretation expressed some limitations on the commandment to love your neighbor, so it applied only in relation to Israelites and proselytes. Other people, like Samaritans, foreigners, and resident aliens, who are not part of Israel’s community within twelve months, are excluded.⁴¹

In the Old Testament we find some expressions that expand the meaning of the noun “neighbor.” In this sense, we can point out two Sapiential verses: 1) “every creature loves its like, and every person the neighbor” (Sir 13:15), and 2) “Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker [God], but those who are kind to the needy honor him [God]” (Prov 14:31). Behind these expressions we read the doctrine of the *image of God* (see Gen 1:27) and what it means to respect all human beings as God’s image.⁴² Thus, the lawyer’s question in Luke 10:29 “Who is my neighbor?” has to be read in a context where the meaning of neighbor was limited. Given this context, his question refers to a “love of neighbor” limited to fellow-members of the covenant, within a national community.⁴³

The Lucan Jesus through the parable of the Good Samaritan expands the lawyer’s understanding of the noun “neighbor.” He goes beyond land, race, social, cultural, and religious differences, and this perspective is new in Luke 10:25-37.

The term “neighbor” is used twice by both the lawyer (v. 29) and Jesus (v. 36). For each of them the comprehension of neighbor is different; the enormous distance between the lawyer’s and Jesus’ understanding of it becomes clear. Hence, in Luke 10:29 the question is focused on the object of love, the one who needs to be loved, while Luke 10:36 focuses on the subject of

⁴¹ Cf. Fichtner, “Plesion,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. VI (Πε–Ρ), 315.

⁴² The doctrine of the *image of God* will be presented in the next chapter

⁴³ Cf. Fichtner, “Plesion,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. VI (Πε–Ρ), 315.

love, the one who loves.⁴⁴ In this sense, it must be noted that more important than “Who is my neighbor?” are the questions “What does love mean to each of us?” and “What does neighbor mean to us?” For Jesus, “love your neighbor” means loving even enemies (through merciful actions) and those who hate us (see Lk 6:27-28; 33-36; 14:12-14), while to the lawyer love means loving someone who is able to become his neighbor. In this sense, according to Marshall, the lawyer’s question was not “‘Who is my neighbor?’” but rather ‘Who belongs to the concept of ‘neighbor’?’,⁴⁵ i.e., as object of love. Furthermore, Marshall says:

Jesus’ answer is that any person is a ‘neighbour’ if he belongs to the circle of those who regard the law as valid and keep it. This was true of the Samaritan in the story; in other words, non-Jews can be ‘neighbours’, and Jews themselves (as typified by the priest and Levite) must take care that they too qualify as ‘neighbours’ by keeping the law.⁴⁶

The Lucan Jesus expands the meaning of the noun “neighbor” beyond any kind of limitation through the actions of the Samaritan, who becomes neighbor by keeping God’s law to help the needy man, i.e., as subject of love. Therefore, the Lucan Jesus ends any ambiguity and controversial understanding of the noun *plesion* (neighbor). For him, *pleison* must be understood through the lens of the double commandment of love rather than purity codes. The imperatives “go and do likewise” in verse 37b show us not only the importance of “doing,” but also they reveal Jesus’ authority. He is the “the Teacher” (v. 25), who interprets what neighbor means in a definitive way. The Lucan Jesus instructs his audience from the Hebrew bible and gives a definitive meaning of Leviticus 19:18 and Deuteronomy 6:5 as well.⁴⁷

Luke 10:30-35

⁴⁴ Cf. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 445.

⁴⁵ *Loc. Cit.*

⁴⁶ *Loc. Cit.*

⁴⁷ It must be said that this thesis does not try to say what Leviticus intended to say by “love your neighbor” (Lev 19:18). The thesis tries to show that Jesus is being very specific about interpreting “love your neighbor” from Leviticus.

Luke 10:30-35 has a possible background in 2 Chronicles 28:8-15, where the author uses a possibly Ephraimite resource to refer to a massacre of Jews by the troops of the Northern Kingdom and the deportation of prisoners.⁴⁸ When they arrived at Samaria, Oded, the prophet of the Lord, met them and criticized their actions (see 2 Chr 28:9-11). 2 Chronicles 28:15 says:

those who were mentioned by name got up and took the captives, and with the booty they clothed all that were naked among them; they clothed them, gave them sandals, provided them with food and drink, and anointed them; and carrying all the feeble among them on donkeys, they brought them to their kindred at Jericho, the city of palm trees.

As we see, this verse is somehow parallel with the Samaritan's actions (see Lk 10:34-35), and perhaps the Lucan Jesus knew this story and the good deeds of these Samaritans, who are called by the prophet "kindred"⁴⁹ (2 Chr 28:11).

At this point, if we consider this possible background and other passages of Luke's Gospel, like Luke 4:16-18; 10:27a and so forth, then I agree with Bovon who affirms: "The Lukan work is rooted in the OT in two ways. First, the life of Jesus affirms the persevering faithfulness of God with regard to the people Israel, the first addressee of the gospel. Then, the literary genre of the double work is reminiscent of the OT historiography, especially Deuteronomy."⁵⁰

The actions of the Samaritan in favor of the mugged man show that salvation is a possibility for everyone. In this regard, Plummer argues that Luke 10:25-37 is "entirely in harmony with the general character of this Gospel as teaching that righteousness and salvation are not the exclusive privilege of the Jew."⁵¹ The third Gospel clearly and powerfully speaks of the universality of salvation. According to Luke salvation is offered to all people. Universality in

⁴⁸ Cf. Raymond Brown, Joseph Fitzmyer, and Roland Murphy, eds. *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, vol. I: *The Old Testament* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 423.

⁴⁹ Other Bible versions use either "brethren" or "brothers." (see ASV, KJV and NAS)

⁵⁰ François Bovon, *Luke the Theologian: Fifty-five Years of Research (1950-2005)*, 2nd rev. ed. (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, c2006), 34.

⁵¹ Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, 285.

Luke's Gospel is seen for example in John the Baptist's preaching when he says "all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Lk 3:6; see Acts 2:21). In the prophecy of Simeon, also, salvation has been prepared in the presence of all peoples (see Lk 2:30-32). Even when the Lucan Jesus announces his program, he does in terms of universality: the poor, the captives, the blind, the oppressed (see Lk 4:16-18). Thus, the Lucan Jesus brings salvation to all peoples, not only to Jews, Gentiles, sinners, tax collectors, Samaritans, and the poor, but also to rich people like Zacchaeus, who makes a proper use of his wealth (see Lk 19:1-10).

■ ***A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho:*** The term "a man" represents complete anonymity. The other characters can be identified with a particular group. The man who was assaulted has no other designation than "a man." For Marshall, "the story intentionally leaves the man undescribed; he can be any man, although a Jewish audience would naturally think of him as a Jew."⁵² The scene of this anonymous man's plight is presented in a well-known way to the Jews of that time: "the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was seventeen miles long and a traveler would descend 3300 feet. Jericho lies 770 feet below sea level."⁵³ Regarding this dangerous road⁵⁴ Fitzmyer notes: "Josephus tells of Essenes who carried on their journeys only arms, precisely as protection against highway robbers."⁵⁵ This dangerous road was known as the "the red or bloody way," and was protected by a fort and a Roman garrison."⁵⁶ Furthermore, Smith adds:

The whole way from Jericho to Jerusalem, says Josephus (Bel. l. iv. c. 8. sec. 2), is desert and rocky; and nothing can be more savage than the present aspect of these wild and gloomy solitudes; which have been so noted as the haunts of the most desperate bandits, as to obtain, in the time of Jerome, the appellation of the field of blood. Here, says Mr.

⁵² Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 447.

⁵³ Thomas R. Schreiner, "Luke," in *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1996, c1989), 820.

⁵⁴ This geographic reference might be a Lucan strategy to capture the audience's attention.

⁵⁵ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)*, 886

⁵⁶ "Luke 10:30," *Biblos*, accessed February 19, 2010, <http://bible.cc/luke/10-30.htm>

Buckingham, pillage, wounds, and death, would be accompanied with double terror, from the frightful aspect of everything around; here the unfeeling act of passing by a fellow creature in distress, strikes one with horror, as an act more than inhuman; and here too, the compassion of the good Samaritan is doubly virtuous, from the purity of the motive which must have led to it, in a spot where no eyes were fixed upon him, and from the bravery which was necessary to admit of a man's exposing himself, by such delay, to the risk of a similar fate.⁵⁷

The abandoned man, who could be a Jew if we consider both Luke's audience and the fact that he was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, cannot be identified, so we do not know which particular group he belongs to. He has been stripped of one of the most distinctive cultural signs, his clothes. Because he was abandoned half-dead he cannot talk, so he cannot identify with any linguistic group. Hence, the man assaulted is presented as a human being in total need who has lost his human dignity.

Luke 10:31-32

■ ***A priest and a Levite:*** Both a priest and a Levite passed by when they saw the mugged man. They would probably be returning from Jerusalem; that means from liturgical service in the Temple. When they saw the abandoned man they may have avoided him because they thought he was dead, and they did not want to become ritually unclean, especially if they were coming back from the Temple to Jericho which was known "as a place where some priests lived."⁵⁸ In this sense, we have to recall Leviticus 21:1-2, which commanded to religious Jews: "No one shall defile himself for a dead person among his relatives, except for his nearest kin: his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, his brother." For Fitzmyer, "The defilement was considered to be derived from contact with a dead (or apparently dead) body; this affected those of the priestly

⁵⁷ Jerome H. Smith ed. *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge: The Most Complete Listing of Cross References Available Anywhere- Every Verse, Every Theme, Every Important Word* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 1992), 1150.

⁵⁸ Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)*, 887.

and levitical status more seriously than other Jews.”⁵⁹ Thus, the ritual laws were considered an end in themselves; the implementation of these laws was considered the best way to achieve eternal life, by sanctifying ordinary life as a way of dedication to God. In this regard, Grabbe notes, the priests and the Levites between Second Temple Judaism and the final destruction of the temple (70 C.E.) “had the responsibility to carry out the sacrificial system which lay at the heart of Israelite religion. This is their main function as indicated in the book of Leviticus which gives detailed information on the sacrificial cult and the functioning of the priesthood.”⁶⁰ Let us note here that the priests and the Levites were the ones who interpreted and provided authoritative rulings about the law, so “they were transmitters of the written scriptures, the cultivators of wisdom, the interpreters of the religious tradition, and even the authors and editors of the written Word.”⁶¹ These two members of the priesthood somehow were custodians and interpreters of the law. However, their law seems to be guided by ritual issues rather than God’s commandments. The priest and the Levite considered the ritual codes the way to obtain eternal salvation through sanctification; they were an end in themselves.

The Lucan Jesus, in Luke 10:31-32, is not putting forward an opinion concerning the actions of both the priest and the Levite, but rather he is describing what takes place in this tale. The narrative would not be showing us the hardness of heart of these two religious Jews when they saw the half-dead man but would be displaying some attitudes that come from their religious law and purity codes. Therefore, purity code, religious law, and a narrow comprehension of “neighbor” are what the Lucan Jesus criticizes. Influenced by their religious

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 883.

⁶⁰ Lester L. Grabbe, *An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism: History and Religion of the Jews in the Time of Nehemiah, the Maccabees, Hillel and Jesus* (London; New York: T&T Clark, c2010), 43.

⁶¹ Grabbe, *An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism*, 43.

and cultural conceptions, both the priest and the Levite are trapped in their legal, ritual, and cultural system, but they remain faithful to those religious and ritual practices.

Luke 10:33.

■ **A Samaritan:** Jesus surprises his audience by saying that a Samaritan helped the abandoned and half-dead man, because Samaritans were implacable enemies of the Jews (see Lk 9:51-56; Jn 4:9). Samaritans were considered heretical because they mixed with other people, and they did not follow some of the rules and laws set in the purity code of Judaism.⁶² Bratcher recalls for us the hostility between Jews and Samaritans due to racial, cultic, political, and religious differences.⁶³ As a result of this history of conflict, therefore the term Samaritan had a strong negative connotation for Jews.

The Samaritans were thought to descend from the northern Kingdom of Israel, whose political autonomy ended with the invasion of the Assyrians in 722 B.C.⁶⁴ Jews and Samaritans shared a common genealogical heritage (see Jn 4:12), but they had their differences. The greatest difference between these groups came from the establishment of a Samaritan center of worship at Gerizim rather than Jerusalem.⁶⁵ Let us mention that that after the Babylonian Exile, Samaritans offered to help Israel rebuild the Temple, but the Jews refused their help (see Ezra 4:3). “Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah, and made them afraid to build, and they bribed officials to frustrate their plan” (Ezra 4:4-5). This fact was one reason for the growing hostility between Jews and Samaritans. After the Samaritans had been rejected by the Jews, they

⁶² Cf. Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Understanding Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism* (Jersey City, N.J.: KTVA Pub. House, 2003), 49-50.

⁶³ Cf. Bratcher, *A Translator's Guide to the Gospel of Luke*, 186.

⁶⁴ Cf. James Alan Montgomery, *The Samaritans: The Earliest Jewish Sect* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1907), 1; 48.

⁶⁵ J. Jeremias, “Samaritan,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. VII (Σ), eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans., Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976), 89.

decided to build their own temple on Mount Gerizim, which produced total division between them.⁶⁶

Conflicts between the Jews and the Samaritans were frequent. For instance, in the days of the procurator Coponius (6-9 A.D.) the Samaritans scattered bones of the dead in the Temple of Jerusalem.⁶⁷ This incident increased the hostility of the Jews toward the Samaritans at the time of Jesus.

Jeremias points out some of Jesus' attitude regarding Samaritans:⁶⁸

- a. Jesus accepts the exclusion of Samaritans from the community (Mt 10:5-6; Lk 17:18).
- b. Yet he rebukes his disciples for their hostility (Lk 9:55), asks the Samaritan woman for a drink (Jn 4:7), heals a Samaritan leper (Lk 17:16), extols a Samaritan for neighborly love (10:30ff.) and gratitude to God (17:11ff.), and preaches to Samaritans (Jn 4:40ff.).

These attitudes of Jesus somehow proleptically announce the time of fulfillment when salvation comes to all peoples, Jews and non-Jews, poor and non-poor.

■ ***he was moved with pity:*** The Greek word for pity is *splanchnizomai*, which means “to feel deeply or viscerally, to yearn, have compassion, pity.”⁶⁹ This word occurs twelve times in the New Testament, but only in the synoptic Gospels: five times in Matthew, four in Mark, and three in Luke. According to Köster, *splanchnizomai* denotes human attitudes in three parables: “in Mt 18:27 the lord has pity on the servant, in Lk 15:20 the father has compassion on the prodigal, and in Lk 10:33 the Samaritan has compassion on the man who has fallen among thieves.”⁷⁰ He adds, “In all these instances the term [*splanchnizomai*] reflects the totality of the divine mercy to which human compassion is a proper response. Elsewhere in the Synoptics the

⁶⁶ Cf. Montgomery, *The Samaritans*, 57-60.

⁶⁷ Jeremias, “Samaritan,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. VII (Σ), 92.

⁶⁸ Jeremias, “Samaritan,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume*, 999.

⁶⁹ Spiros Zodhiates, ed., *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993), G4697.

⁷⁰ H. Köster, “Splanchnizomai,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume*, 1068.

verb has messianic significance, for it is only Jesus who shows compassion, as in Mk 1:42; 6:34; 8:2; 9:22; Mt 14:14; 20:34.”⁷¹

The Scriptures show us that *splanchnizomai* is a verb that mainly expresses Jesus’ and the Father’s profound compassion toward humankind. One of the exceptions seems to be our parable, where the verb *splanchnizomai* is related neither to Jesus nor to the king nor to the father but rather to a Samaritan (see Annex 4: *Splanchnizomai* in the Synoptic Gospels). Although this is not necessarily an allegory about Jesus, the parable presents through the Samaritan’s actions some characteristic qualities of Jesus and God. In this sense, Walter points out:

in the exemplary story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30ff.) ἐσπλαγχνίσθη represents the decisive motive behind the Samaritan’s compassionate behavior toward the victim. Whereas Matt 18:23ff. and Luke 15:11ff. clearly portray God’s behavior toward human beings, Luke 10:30ff. apparently portrays the Samaritan as one who “gauges” God’s own compassion and thus does God’s will. Any allegorical interpretation of the Samaritan using σπλαγχνίζομαι as a point of departure to refer to Jesus misses the mark (Sellin 25-27).⁷²

In the parable there are many other words that are important like: teacher, eternal life, oil, wine, take care, two denarii, and so forth; however, the “Close Reading” section has focused on those words that can help us to answer questions of this thesis.

D. SYNOPTIC ANALYSIS

According to a synoptic analysis (see Annex 3: Parallel Texts), dialogue “A” (Lk 10:25-28⁷³) is present in the other Synoptic Gospels, while Luke 10:29-37, the parable of the Good Samaritan, is unique to Luke’s Gospel. Therefore, the synoptic analysis will be performed on Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34 and Luke 10:25-28 (well-known as either “The Great Commandment”

⁷¹ *Loc. Cit.*

⁷² N. Walter, “Splanchnizomai,” in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. III, ed. Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, trans., William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, c1990), 265.

⁷³ “In the opening scene Luke depends on Mk. 12:28-34, because he will omit this story later (at 20:40)” (Raymond Brown, Joseph Fitzmyer, and Roland Murphy, eds., *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, vol. II: *The New Testament and Topical Articles* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 143).

or “The Lawyer’s Question”). Matthew and Mark place the text just after Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem (see Mt 21:10-1; Mk 11:7-11), where attention is drawn to the moment when he cleanses the Temple and drives out all who are selling and buying there (see Mt 21:12-16; Mk 15:19). After this story, in Matthew’s Gospel, Jesus denounces the Pharisees and Sadducees (see Mt 23) and announces the destruction of Jerusalem, the temple and the world (see Mt 24), while in Mark’s gospel, Jesus only refers to the destruction of Jerusalem (see Mk 13).

Although Matthew and Mark present a similar structure there are some differences between them. In Matthew, a Pharisee lawyer is the one who takes the initiative and tests Jesus. In Mark, however, it is a scribe who asks the question, encouraged by the fine answers Jesus has given to other questions. In Luke, a lawyer is the one who stands up to test Jesus. In Matthew the question is formulated as follows: “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” (Mt 22:36), and in Mark: “Which commandment is the first of all?” (Mk 12:28b). As we see, the question in Matthew’s Gospel is focused on the “Law,” which is connected to Matthew 22:40 (“On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets”). Mark’s gospel, meanwhile, frames the question within the pagan world, therefore it avoids the use of the term “Law” (Mosaic Law). According to Mark’s Gospel the double commandment of love will dominate any ritual law (see Mk 12:33). In Luke’s Gospel the lawyer’s question is focused on salvation (see Lk 10:25). Therefore, the lawyer wants to involve Jesus in a theological argument about what is necessary for inheriting eternal life. Jesus answers the initial question in both Matthew and Mark’s Gospel while in Luke’s Gospel the lawyer answers his own question.

E. NARRATIVE CRITICISM

The narrative criticism⁷⁴ will be based on Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin⁷⁵ methodology.⁷⁶ Narrative criticism helped by “Form Criticism” and “Close Reading” sections should allow us to enter into the narrative and to make a response to the events and characters that compose the story. Thus, through this analysis “we enter a world full of conflict and suspense, a world of surprising reversals and strange ironies, a world of riddles and hidden meanings.”⁷⁷

1. The Narrator

The narrator conducts the narratee (audience and readers) through a series of questions and replies between the lawyer and Jesus. As previously pointed out, Jesus does not answer the lawyer’s question, but he leads the dialogue through questions, and he closes both dialogues “A”

⁷⁴ “Narrative analysis [criticism] involves a new way of understanding how a text works. While the historical-critical method considers the text as a “window” giving access to one or other period (not only to the situation which the story relates but also to that of the community for whom the story is told), narrative analysis insists that the text also functions as a “mirror” in the sense that it projects a certain image -a “narrative world”- which exercises an influence upon readers’ perceptions in such a way as to bring them to adopt certain values rather than others. [...] Connected with this kind of study primarily literary in character, is a certain mode of theological reflection as one considers the implications the “story” (and also the “witness”) character of Scripture has with respect to the consent of faith and as one derives from this a hermeneutic of a more practical and pastoral nature. There is here a reaction against the reduction of the inspired text to a series of theological theses, often formulated in non-scriptural categories and language. What is asked of narrative exegesis is that it rehabilitate in new historical contexts the modes of communicating and conveying meaning proper to the biblical account in order to open up more effectively its saving power. Narrative analysis insists upon the need both to tell the story of salvation (the “informative” aspect) and to tell the story in view of salvation (the ‘performative’ aspect). The biblical account, in effect, whether explicitly or implicitly as the case may be, contains an existential appeal addressed to the reader. [...] The usefulness of narrative analysis for the exegesis of the Bible is clear. It is well suited to the narrative character which so many biblical texts display. It can facilitate the transition, often so difficult, from the meaning of the text in its historical context (the proper object of the historical-critical method) to its significance for the reader of today.” (Pontifical Biblical Commission, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, accessed July 3, 2011, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/curia/pbcinter.htm>)

⁷⁵ Daniel Marguerat and Yvan Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories: An Introduction to Narrative Criticism* (London: SCM Press, 1999). Hereafter I will quote as Marguerat.

⁷⁶ I have chosen Marguerat and Bourquin methodology because of its simplicity and pedagogical exposition. Nonetheless we have to say that there are many other biblical scholars who use narrative criticism such as: Jean Louis Ska, “Sincronía: El Análisis Narrativo,” in *Metodología del Nuevo Testamento*, ed. Horacio Simian-Yofre, trans., Alfonso Ortiz García (Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme, 2001); Joel B. Green, *Methods for Luke* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Jean-Nöel Aletti, *El Arte de Contar a Jesucristo: Lectura Narrativa del Evangelio de Lucas* (Sígueme: Salamanca, 1992); and, Mark Allan Powell, *What is narrative criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, c1990).

⁷⁷ Rober Alter, “The Art of Biblical Narrative,” in Joel B. Green, *Methods for Luke* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 76.

and “B” by using imperatives and sending the lawyer to practice what he knows. The imperatives, however, are used both by Jesus (three times: once in v. 28b and twice in v. 37b) and the Samaritan (see v. 35a). These imperatives show us the importance of “doing” for the narrator, and this is consistent with the lawyer’s initial question (v. 26b).

In the parable it is important to underline the number of verbs (v. 33-35) that are assigned to the Samaritan by the Lucan Jesus narrator. One of these verbs is *splanchnizomai* which I consider the most important since it will motivate the Samaritan’s actions in favor of the anonymous man.

Regarding the *position of the narrator*, the criterion used to describe *narrative authority* is the opposition between the narrator and the story told (*diegesis*). This opposition is set up both “in the face of the story told” (levels) and by the “intrusive narrator” (relationship).⁷⁸ Therefore, in Luke 10:25-29.36-37 the narrator is outside the *diegesis*, so it is *extradiegetic* authority. However, in Luke 10:30-35, where the narrator through Jesus presents us the parable of the Good Samaritan, the narrator is inside, so it is *intradiegetic* authority with Jesus as the *narrated narrator*.⁷⁹ Regarding the *intrusive narrator*, the Lucan Jesus is present in the story that he relates (*homodiegetic*) in Luke 10:30-35, where the Samaritan’s actions refer to Jesus and the Father. In Luke 10:25-29.36-37 the narrator is absent from the story that he relates (*heterodiegetic*).

2. The Closure of the Narrative

⁷⁸ Cf. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 25-27.

⁷⁹ When Jesus tells a parable he figures as a narrated narrator whose words are reported by an extradiegetic narrator, a primary narrator, who is the evangelist (Cf. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 25).

We already know that Luke 10:25-37 is delimited by theme, characters, and the starting Lucan formula *kai idou*. Next, I will present the closure of the narrative according to scenes⁸⁰ and the narrative sequence in the Good Samaritan parable.

3. Scenes

For Marguerat “the scene changes when the narrator makes the readers see something else, when he offers them another overall view or another segment of it.”⁸¹ The scenes are determined through change of characters (dialogue between the lawyer and Jesus), theme (from eternal life to neighbor), and perspective (lawyer). According to these criteria there are five scenes in Luke 10:25-37. The first three scenes correspond with the dialogue “A” and the next two correspond with “the parable of the Good Samaritan” and the final dialogue between Jesus and the lawyer.

Dialogue “A” (Luke 10:25-28)

Scene 1 (v. 25a):	A lawyer stands up to test Jesus.
Scene 2 (v. 25b-26):	The lawyer asks Jesus about eternal life, and Jesus replies to him with another question.
Scene 3 (v. 27-28):	The lawyer answers with the <i>shema</i> , and Jesus approves his answer and uses the first imperative.

Dialogue “B” (Luke 10:29-37)

Scene 4 (v. 29-36):	Again the lawyer asks a question to Jesus. The lawyer’s question is about the notion of neighbor. Jesus answers him by telling him a story.
Scene 5 (v. 37):	Jesus replies to the lawyer, asking who was the neighbor. The lawyer answers well, and the narrator presents us with a change of perspective. Jesus uses the second imperative.

These scenes show the narrative sequence in Luke 10:25-37. Thus, the first dialogue is connected with the lawyer’s concern about eternal life. He knows the law, he knows what he must do to inherit eternal life, but he does not practice it. The theme in dialogue “B” goes beyond this and

⁸⁰ “Scene: sub-unit of a micro-narrative. Micro-narrative: the minimal narrative unit presenting a narrative episode the unity of which can be identified by indicators of closure.” (Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 34.)

⁸¹ Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 34.

focuses on the term “neighbor.” It is important to highlight that the Lucan Jesus not only replies to the lawyer’s question about the notion of neighbor by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan, but also he modifies the original meaning of the question that had been asked by the lawyer in v. 29b (see v. 36). Let us note here that the interest is no longer on who my neighbor is but rather it is on “To whom I am a neighbor?” The narrator faces the narratee with a transformation and recognition story; we therefore, have a revelation plot or revelation event.

4. The Plot

The following plots⁸² are found in Luke 10:25-37:

a. Episodic Plot⁸³

One of the most important themes in Luke 10:25-37 is the fulfillment of the double commandment (to love God and love your neighbor [v. 25-28]) in order to inherit eternal life and its further application under the example of the Samaritan (v. 30-35). Therefore, this pericope unveils to us an episodic plot that does not require either previous or subsequent detailed information about the episodes to be understood.

b. Revelation Plot⁸⁴

This narrative begins with the lawyer’s question, which makes apparent that, beyond wanting to test Jesus, he is not able to recognize who his neighbor is. Determined as it was by religious, social, and cultural contexts, the lawyer’s understanding about the notion of neighbor was limited. His answer in v. 37a shows that his horizon of understanding of the term “neighbor” has

⁸² “This unifying structure which links the various happenings in the story and organizes them into a continuous account is called ‘plot’. The plot safeguards the unity of action and gives meaning to the multiple elements in the story. It is on this specific point that the narrative is distinct from the chronicle, which simply enumerates facts. The narrative does not just enumerate: changing the order of reality, by means of the plot it substitutes a causal order. Linked together by a causal logic, the facts are thus made necessary by the narrative” (Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 40).

⁸³ “A plot the narrative makers of which coincide with the micro-narrative” (Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 56).

⁸⁴ “A plot the transforming action of which consists in a gain of knowledge about a character in the story” (Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 56).

become broader, deeper, and perhaps unlimited and universal. In this sense, Tannehill comments: “The lawyer may or may not ‘go and do likewise,’ but, having come to understand love of neighbor in a new way through the parable, new ways of acting are made possible. The scene ends with this possibility rather than with rejection by the lawyer.”⁸⁵ In this plot it is important to highlight the directions of the questions about the term “neighbor,” asked first by the lawyer (v. 29b) and then by Jesus (v. 36). Having told the story of the Samaritan, Jesus’ reply (“Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor...” [v. 36]) changes the direction and meaning of the original question asked by the lawyer (v. 29b). While the original question about the neighbor was focused on oneself (Who is my neighbor?), now it is focused on the Other (“To whom am I a neighbor?”). In this sense, Plummer adds: “Whose claim on my neighbourly help do I recognize?”⁸⁶ The inversion of these questions about the term “neighbor” shows us the transformation that is taking place in the lawyer’s coming to understand neighbor as one who practices divine mercy (as the Samaritan did it). Furthermore, the lawyer is able to see and recognize (*anagnorisis*) who his neighbor is by becoming himself a neighbor.

c. The Quinary Scheme of Luke 10:25-37

According to the quinary scheme (“a structural model splitting up the plot of the narrative into five successive moments”) Luke 10:25-37 presents the following structure:

1. Initial situation:	25a	Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus.
2. Complication: (v. 25b-29)	25b	“Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”
	26	He [Jesus] said to him,
	27	“What is written in the law? What do you read there?”
		He [the lawyer] answered,
		“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.”
	28	And he [Jesus] said to him,

⁸⁵ Robert C. Tannehill, *Luke* (Nashville, Tennessee: Abingdon Press, 1996), 181.

⁸⁶ Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke*, 288.

	29	“You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.” But wanting to justify himself, he [the lawyer] asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”
3. Transforming action: (v. 30-36)	30-35 36	Jesus replied, (“Parable of the Good Samaritan”) Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?”
4. Resolution:	37a	He [the lawyer] said, “The one who showed him mercy.”
5. Final situation:	37b	Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

As we see, the transforming action of the whole passage corresponds to the story about the Samaritan which will present its own scheme.

d. The Quinary Scheme of Luke 10:30-35

The Good Samaritan parable (Luke 10:30a-37) is told by Jesus as *narrated narrator*. The scheme is the following:

1. Initial situation:	30a	“A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho,
2. Complication:	30b	and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.
3. Transforming action:	31 32 33	Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity.
4. Resolution:	34 35	He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’
5. Final situation:		-----

Luke 10:30-35 presents the following quinary scheme: 1) the *initial situation* begins when Jesus replies to the lawyer’s question, “And who is my neighbor?” (v. 29), by telling about “a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho” (v. 30a). 2) The *complication* starts when the

anonymous man is assaulted and left half-dead by the robbers (see v. 30b). This knot increases the narrative tension. 3) The *transforming action* shows a sequence of characters and their actions in answer to the lawyer's question. The first two (Jews) do not react in favor of the man who had been assaulted, while the Samaritan does. The Samaritan had compassion and was a neighbor. Therefore, the Samaritan's actions are the turning point in the transformative action. 4) The *resolution* begins when the Samaritan comes and provides assistance to the anonymous man. The Samaritan not only offers his aid to this man by expending himself and his resources but also, the next day, he leaves the man to be cared for by the innkeeper. Furthermore, he agrees to come back and pay the extra expenses that may result. As we see, the resolution is symmetrical with the complication, so the situation is re-established in its former state. In this section we highlight that the final situation is absent, so the *narrated narrator* (the Lucan Jesus) faces us with a narrative suspension.⁸⁷ The story does not provide us with further information about the Samaritan, the man assaulted, the priest, or the Levite. These characters disappear; their roles were used to support the plot.

With great economy of words Luke 10:30-35 relates the story of a man who was mugged, ignored, and finally helped. The verbs describe what is happening in this story, while the narrative tension increases and shows us this anonymous man who had lost his human dignity and essential values, which are restored by the Samaritan's actions. The robbers have left their victim in a situation of extreme solitude and desperation. The anonymous man has been abandoned half-dead, which both increases the narrative tension and engages the audience by showing us the existential situation of this mugged man on the Jericho road.

⁸⁷ "The narrator can leave out the *denouement* [resolution] or the *final situation*, but not both. The absence of the final state is a recognized narrative procedure: the interrupted narrative. This trick of narrative suspension leads the reader to imply it for himself, imagining how the narrative would conclude" (Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 48).

5. The Characters

Luke 10:25-37 presents two main characters: a lawyer and Jesus. Then, Jesus as *narrated narrator* will present a priest, a Levite, a Samaritan, as well as an innkeeper.

a. Classifying the Characters⁸⁸

The two main characters in the beginning and end of our passage are the lawyer and Jesus; both of them are protagonists in the development of the plot. Moreover, viewing the traits of these two characters, we can conclude that both are flat characters (they present a single trait). The parable (Lk 10:30-35) is more complex because of the traits presented by each character.

There are two *protagonists* in our parable: the anonymous man and the Samaritan. The first is a victim of the system at that time; the latter plays an active role in the plot and his character is enriched by a number of verbal actions in favor of this victim. Also, there are *walk-ons*⁸⁹ in the tale who are the robbers, the priest, and the Levite. The innkeeper is an *agent*⁹⁰ in this story.

Now, to objectify the consistency of the narrative we need to analyze the traits that determine our characters. In this sense, the assaulted man, the robbers, the priest, the Levite, and the innkeeper are *flat characters* (they present a single trait) while the Samaritan is a *rounded character* who presents several traits through his actions (v. 33-35). If the Samaritan is a *rounded character* and a *protagonist*, then the narrator places him before the reader as the *hero*. His actions are parallel to the actions of the robbers, the priest and the Levite. Hence, the narrator

⁸⁸ Cf. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 60-64.

⁸⁹ “A simple character, playing a passive or quasi-passive (background) role in the narrative” (Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 60).

⁹⁰ “A simple character, playing a minor (or single) role in the development of the plot” (Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 60).

shows that the actions of these people were overcome by the actions of the Good Samaritan, and so the readers are also before a contrast or *syncrisis*.⁹¹

b. The Evaluation of the Characters

This section will analyze the characters according to three types of feelings: *sympathy*, *empathy*, and *antipathy*.⁹²

In Luke 10:25-29.37, the readers who have felt *sympathy* for the lawyer at the beginning of the narrative will continue to have the same feeling, but will be challenged by the Samaritan's actions: they will feel challenged to "go and do likewise." Now if we consider that the goal of Luke is to present Jesus and his mission, then this character will receive everything he needs from Luke to evoke in the readers a feel of *empathy*.

When the readers look at Luke 10:30-35, they can have different feelings for the group of characters that the Lucan Jesus is presenting. The readers who have felt *sympathy* for the assaulted man may discover themselves helped by the Samaritan. The readers who have felt *sympathy* for either the priest or the Levite will be confronted because of their purity code and perhaps narrow understanding of the term "neighbor." The readers who have at first felt *antipathy* for the Samaritan may, after reading his actions in favor of the assaulted man, feel *sympathy* with him. This *sympathy* will become more intense and it will become *empathy* as the narrator describes more and more merciful actions to compensate for the actions committed against the anonymous man by the robbers. At the end of the story, the readers who have felt *sympathy* for the priest and Levite may feel *antipathy* because their actions were contrary to the Samaritan's actions. The readers who have felt *antipathy* for the robbers will keep the same feeling because of their actions.

⁹¹ *Syncrisis* "consists in putting the activity of several characters in parallel, with a view either to comparing them or to marking the continuity from one to the other" (Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 127).

⁹² Cf. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 68.

c. The Interplay of Focalizations

The concept of *focalization* allows us to know from whose perspective the narrator has chosen to present the event. According to Marguerat, the narrator can adopt three types of focalization:

*internal, external, and zero.*⁹³

In Luke 10:25-37, the narrator tells the story with both *internal focalization* and *external focalization*. The narrator begins by telling the story with *external focalization*, “Just then a lawyer stood up” (v. 25a); he then moves immediately to *internal focalization*, “to test Jesus” (v. 25a). The following verses (v. 25b-28) are narrated with *external focalization*, which allows the readers to follow what is happening between the lawyer and Jesus. In Luke 10:29a, the narrator begins by telling the story with *internal focalization*, “But wanting to justify himself,” (the readers know what is happening inside the lawyer) and immediately moves to *external focalization*, “he [the lawyer] asked Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’” (v. 29b). The parable is told by Jesus with *external focalization* (v. 30-33a.34-35), but it highlights the Samaritan’s actions with *internal focalization*, “and when he saw him, he was moved with pity” (v. 33b). Thus, the *internal focalization* on what is happening inside the Samaritan when he saw the mugged man unveils to the readers not only the core of the story, but also what is taking place in this Good Samaritan. The final question of Jesus in v. 36 is narrated with *external focalization*. The final dialogue between the lawyer and Jesus (see v. 37) is also told with *external focalization*. Hence the readers are informed about the effects of Jesus’ teaching that link the two commandments.

6. Narrative Time

This section focuses on the narrative order.⁹⁴ Luke 10:25-37 reveals two external *analepses*: 1) when the lawyer’s answer (v. 27) recalls the Law in Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18, and

⁹³ Cf. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 72-76.

2) in recounting the actions of the Samaritan (v. 33-35), Jesus evokes 2 Chronicles 28:8-15.

These are external *analepses* because “the force of the anachrony goes beyond the thresholds of the narrative.”⁹⁵

7. The Narrative Voice

The narrative voice is “a voice which strives to guide readers by providing them with all kinds of clarifications that they need to understand the text.”⁹⁶ Thus, in Luke 10:25-37 the narrator intervenes through two explicit commentaries which are formulated in imperatives. These are “do this” (v. 28b) and “go and do likewise” (v. 37b).

The implicit commentaries⁹⁷ which mostly are located in the parable itself (v. 30-36) will be important because they unveil a paradox. According to Marguerat,

There is a paradox since the wounded man, half-dead, cannot express his gratitude and his love. However, by reversing the values, the Gospel is interested in the attitude of the wounded man. It calls on him to allow himself to be approached by the other and cared for by him. This attitude of poverty suggests a definition of love which consists in receiving from the other. Jesus’ ‘Go and do likewise’ is an invitation to a twofold movement: 1) to help the other; 2) to allow oneself to be approached by him, even when one can give him nothing in return.⁹⁸

Later in Chapter two, this paradox will allow us to introduce the concepts of *affinity* and *otherness* since I consider this twofold movement in a dialectic way.

8. The Role of the Text and the Role of the Reader

The lawyer’s understanding of neighbor is limited and the narrator knows it. The Samaritan’s actions challenge both the lawyer and the readers and offer them the possibility to widen their

⁹⁴ Cf. Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 72-76.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

⁹⁷ “By the implicit commentary, the narrator speaks directly; the reader hears his voice. But communication can be established indirectly: then the narrator speaks ‘tacitly’ through the words and actions of the characters, through the plot” (Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 106).

⁹⁸ Marguerat and Bourquin, *How to Read Bible Stories*, 169

comprehension of the term neighbor beyond any cultural, religious, and social differences. For the Lucan Jesus the term “neighbor” is uncategorized.

As Luke 10:25-37 is located within Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51-19:27), so the narrator places the readers on the Jericho road, the journey, and the way of discipleship. Therefore, the final words in this parable (“Go and do likewise”) will launch the readers not only to become neighbors and practice the double commandment of love as the Good Samaritan did, but also to join in the mission of discipleship. To become Christ’s followers, the Lucan Jesus presents us this paradigm as a model of *praxis*. In this sense, it will be essential to have the experience of being moved by pity (*splanchnizomai*), which will bring us the opportunity either to act or to react in favor of human dignity, and then we will be worthy to inherit eternal life.

CONCLUSIONS

Luke 10:25-37 is part of the section on the journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51-19:27). This section presents a progressive instructive revelation of the elements of the reign of God. Therefore, the audience step by step goes deeper into its meaning. The Good Samaritan parable takes up and elaborates on the implications of the double commandment of love and the practice of merciful love.

The commandment to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev 19:18) covered Jews, and its application was widened in Leviticus 19:33-34 to apply to strangers as well as to Jews. Thus, the concept of neighbor in Leviticus also includes non-Jews. Hence, through the Samaritan’s story Luke would be showing: 1) a rereading of a law which exists in the Old Testament in order to show us that the Old Testament itself had already stretched the boundaries of race beyond Jews with the commandment “love your neighbor as yourself”; 2) a clear invitation to interpret Scripture through Scripture itself; and, 3) a sincere invitation to fulfill God’s Law by knowing it,

interpreting it correctly (I will discuss *epikeia* in chapter three), and acting properly in our own context. Thus, “Jesus offered a fresh interpretation of the scriptural tradition which he shared with his Jewish contemporaries. He was a critique from within.”⁹⁹

Narrative criticism reveals how the narrator uses different resources to involve and to challenge his audience to “go and do likewise.” The parable of the Good Samaritan unveils the divine mercy through human actions. Through his actions the Samaritan channels the mercy of God and his concern for the poor and the marginalized.

The analysis of Luke 10:30-35 presents a chiasmus (see “Form and Structure”) as well as a *syncretism* (see “Narrative criticism: Classifying the Characters”). It may be said that these results reveal the theological problem of *continuity* and *discontinuity*.¹⁰⁰ Thus, the priest’s and the Levite’s actions represent the Old Testament, and the Samaritan’s actions represents the New Testament. In Luke 10:25-37 the theological problem of *continuity* and *discontinuity* is between God’s saving plan (which makes the double commandment of love possible through the fulfillment of the Law) and the following of Jesus. In this sense, in a first moment, I can declare that the parable of the Good Samaritan is in favor of *continuity*. If so, “What is the newness (“*discontinuity* and *progression*”) of this parable?” and “How is it informing us?” To answer this question it may be suggested two things.

The first is that the parable gives both a theological (love God) and an anthropological (love your neighbor) foundation to ethical action that is rooted in merciful actions and correct comprehension of the term “neighbor;” neighbor is understood regardless of any cultural, social,

⁹⁹ Nicholas Thomas Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, vol. 2: *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 385.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *The Pontifical Biblical Commission: The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*, accessed March 20, 2011, n. 64-65, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/pcb_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20020212_popolo-ebraico_en.html#C.%20Conclusion

racial, and religious differences and frontiers. Jesus' understanding of neighbor is beyond these categories; it is from the perspective of divine mercy while the lawyer's original question was focused on himself ("Who is my neighbor?"). After Jesus' story about the Samaritan, the question is focused on the Other ("To whom am I a neighbor?"). Therefore, the parable informs the reader that one does not have a specific and categorized neighbor; rather, everyone makes himself/herself a neighbor by his/her merciful actions. This is the novelty. Moreover, the newness is in Jesus himself. In this regard *Veritatis Splendor* says, "*Their* [the double commandment of love] *inseparable unity* is attested to by Christ in his words and by his very life: his mission culminates in the Cross of our Redemption (cf. *Jn* 3:14-15), the sign of his indivisible love for the Father and for humanity (cf. *Jn* 13:1)."¹⁰¹ Therefore, Jesus becomes a model, a paradigm through his teachings and *praxis*. Jesus as novelty and paradigm presents to us another model: a Samaritan, an outcast who fulfills the double commandment of love. Let us consider Jesus' preaching at the end of the Sermon on the Mount: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only one who does the will of my Father in heaven (...) Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock" (Mt 7:21.24). Here then, Jesus' preaching and practice reveal the way to fulfill the will of God, and the Lucan Jesus, through the parable of the Good Samaritan, is sending and challenging us to "go and do likewise." This means we need to fulfill God's will in our present time by making ourselves neighbors to others and helping those in need.

The second thing it may be suggested about novelty is that the narrative contains two explicit commentaries (see "Narrative criticism: The Narrative Voice") which are formulated in

¹⁰¹ John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, n. 14b. accessed March 15, 2011, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor_en.html

imperatives by Jesus (see Lk 10:28b.37b). The latter unveils a paradox in the narrative, so the anonymous man and the Samaritan are saved in a dialectical way. Moreover, these imperatives (“do this” and “go and do likewise”) reveal that Jesus’ authority fulfills and is faithful to both God’s will and the commandments. Thus, Jesus reminds us that human intention must be correct and in accordance with God’s will. These imperatives in the context of the journey to Jerusalem and discipleship are showing the way to follow Christ. In this sense, the *interplay of focalizations* (see “Narrative Criticism: The Characters”) shows where ethical action originates. The Lucan Jesus knows the interior of the Samaritan and shows his deepest feeling (*splanchnizomai*) when he sees the mugged man. Therefore, the *internal focalization* describes the Samaritan’s heart and shows the source of his intentions (see Mk 7:20-23) as he moves to help the anonymous man. The Samaritan, through his actions, becomes not only the main protagonist, but also the *hero*; the account therefore turns into an exemplary story, or even more, into a paradigm of *praxis* where the glory of God shines through merciful actions in favor of the abandoned man (“The glory of God is man fully alive, and the life of man is the vision of God.” [St. Irenaeus]). This parable expresses the concern of Jesus as well as the Father for the poor, the marginalized, those who have lost their human dignity.

The plot analysis shows a transformation of the lawyer’s point of view regarding the term “neighbor.” This analysis unveils one of the most important features of this account “to see” and “to recognize,” which agree with Luke’s Gospel narrative program (see Lk 4:18).

The parable offers both theological and anthropological foundations for ethical actions as a way to inherit eternal life; a Christological foundation is not clear since the Samaritan “does not confess” his faith in Jesus. The Lucan Jesus focuses on God’s will and the human condition as well as human dignity; he goes beyond religious codes, and social, cultural, racial and

religious differences. He (a Jew) describes an outcast (a Samaritan) who became neighbor and is saved not because of his race or religion, but rather because of his merciful actions that allow him to become neighbor.

Regarding possible interpretations about the Samaritan it may be noted two things: 1) If we consider the larger context of this parable (Lk 9:51-19:27), then the anonymous man could represent Jesus and the Samaritan could be the Father because of the verb *splanchnizomai* and his merciful actions (“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Lk 6:36). 2) If we consider how the verb *splanchnizomai* works in the synoptic Gospels, then in agreement with traditional allegorical interpretations of this Lucan parable, the Samaritan could represent Jesus.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Cf. James F. Keenan, *Moral wisdom: Lessons and Texts from the Catholic Tradition* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publ., c 2004), 124-126; see also Daniel Harrington and James F. Keenan. *Jesus and Virtue Ethics: Building Bridges between New Testament Studies and Moral Theology* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 58. Other interpretations are mentioned by Forbes (Cf. Greg W. Forbes *The God of Old: The Role of the Lukan Parables in the Purpose of Luke’s Gospel* (Sheffield: Sheffield Acad. Press, 2000), 68-71).

CHAPTER TWO

ANTHROPOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE GOOD SAMARITAN PARABLE

The analysis of Luke 10:25-37 in chapter one revealed a paradox and the importance of the term “neighbor.” The Lucan Jesus, through the parable of the Good Samaritan, defines this noun in a definitive and new way. The parable informs us that one does not have a specific and categorized neighbor; everyone makes himself/herself one’s neighbor by his/her merciful actions. Also, as pointed out in previous chapter, the interest is no longer on “Who is my neighbor?” but rather it is on “To whom I am a neighbor?” The inversion of these questions shows us the transformation that takes place in the lawyer’s coming to understand neighbor as one who practices mercy. The noun “neighbor” is a deeply relational word which involves two people where one’s disposition becomes a first step to make possible a profound encounter that brings salvation to these people.

Chapter two examines the reactions of the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan to the half-dead man on the Jericho road based on “I-Thou” and “I-It” relationships. Also, according to Jon Sobrino, it analyzes the paradox through the lens of categories of *otherness* and *affinity*. Martin Buber, Jewish philosopher, refers to “I-Thou” and “I-It” relations in his book *I and Thou*.¹ For Buber, an “I-Thou” relationship is an authentic encounter which occurs between a human person and another being. Buber outlines three different spheres in which “I-Thou” relations can take place: the natural world, the inter-personal world, and the artistic world. This thesis understands the “I-Thou” relationship not only on an interpersonal level (Buber), but also on political and social levels in agreement with Johann Baptist Metz’s theology. The reflections

¹ Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1937). Buber distinguishes between two modes of relationship, “I-Thou” and “I-It.” The former describes a relationship whereby two people encounter each other in an authentic and profound way, without objectification of the other, while the latter, an “I-It” relationship is with objectification of the other. Regarding ethics, Buber’s ethics is ultimately based not only on an “I-Thou” relationship, i.e., on an interpersonal level, but on the self’s relation to the Eternal Thou (God). Buber’s “I-Thou” enriches our understanding of what it means to encounter another human being rather than provides us moral guidelines.

in this chapter are based on an “I-Thou” relationship that, together with the parable’s process of recognition, should allow us refer to a relational anthropology. The previous chapter showed a paradox, from it emerges an anthropological reflection; such an anthropology aims at an ethical reflection focused on virtue ethics.

Chapter two is divided into two parts. Part one presents two different reactions to the abandoned man on the Jericho road: the first reaction is represented by the priest and the Levite, and the second is represented by the Samaritan. The former will be identified as an “I-It” relationship which will be connected with the purity code of that time and the latter as an “I-Thou” relationship which will be linked not only with compassion, but also with a wider understanding of the term neighbor. These two kinds of relations are important in Metz’s theology because of his understanding of subject, solidarity and political theology.² These relationships will help us to reflect on a relational anthropology, its ethical tasks and, even its political consequences.

The second part of this chapter is divided into two sections. Section “A” presents two categories bearing on salvation: *otherness* and *affinity*. These categories derive from Christological thought of liberation theologian Jon Sobrino³ and attempt to explain how they operate in the parable, making salvation possible in dialectical way. For Sobrino, categories of *otherness* (salvation from outside) and *affinity* (a salvation from alongside) align with resurrection and the cross respectively and make possible the experience of human liberation and salvation. Thus, Section “A” examines the paradox in Luke 10:25-37 through the lens of these “saving categories.” Finally, Section “B” presents a brief reflection of the doctrine of the *image*

² Cf. Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, trans., and ed., James Matthew Ashley (New York: Crossroad Pub. Co., c2007), 60-84, 186-214. In the next chapter, I will discuss Metz’s notions of Subject, memory, narrative, and solidarity.

³ Cf. Jon Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator: A View from Victims*, trans., Paul Burns (New York: Orbis, 2001), 79-95, 256-274.

of God to reflect on the restoration of the human dignity that emerges through the Samaritan's merciful actions.

I. TWO DIFFERENT REACTIONS

Luke chapter 10 presents us with an exemplary model of *praxis* through the Good Samaritan's merciful actions, and so the commandment to love your neighbor becomes very radical. To Christ's followers this radicalness means acknowledging and going out of oneself for others. This radicalness provokes fear: the fear of forgetting oneself and of leaving everything (Lk 18:18-27). It means to risk our own lives for another; so we are challenged to let God be God in our lives through our merciful actions by forgetting ourselves.

The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us that there is no love of God without love of neighbor, i.e., without *praxis*, without concrete merciful actions upon which our salvation depends. Ironically, it can be said that the Samaritan is saved by the assaulted and anonymous man, i.e., both are saved; therefore, we have a paradox (see Chapter One: Narrative Criticism: The Narrative Voice).

The parable of the Good Samaritan reveals two different reactions to this anonymous man: 1) the reactions of the priest and the Levite and 2) the reaction of the Samaritan.

A. A PRIEST AND A LEVITE

As we know, in Luke 10: 30-35 the first to approach the half-dead man was a priest whose profession and task in life should propel him to practice some kind of mercy, but he did not practice compassion and avoided the abandoned man. Next was a Levite, but he likewise passed by without stopping. The Levite, like the priest, went up close to the man to see him, but did not stop to help him. It is possible that the same type of motives for not helping were in the mentality of the Levite as in the priest's case. In this sense, our interpretation is that both thought that the

man was dead and were unwilling to contaminate themselves by contact with a dead body. This interpretation could be connected with the notion of purity at that time. A man who is half-dead (see v. 30) may appear to be dead, with the result that these temple servants might have feared acquiring corpse impurity.⁴

1. Jewish Purity Code

The purity code was a set of regulations and rituals designed to render the Jewish people pure and perfect before Yahweh. Regarding the purity code it is important to note that Jewish purity observation is not a simple and external “code” that prevents true love of God and neighbor. On the contrary, for its devout practitioners the purity code was one way to sanctify ordinary life by dedicating to God.⁵ Pharisees believed that obedience to these rules was essential, and they tried their best to make sure people did just that. They also did their best to avoid anyone who did not, anyone who might contaminate them.⁶ “These codes [...] were the things which marked out the Jews from their pagan neighbours. The Jews knew it; their neighbours knew it.”⁷

⁴ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)*, vol. 28A of *The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 887.

⁵ Regarding sanctification, Neusner notes, “Sanctification being the goal, purity is a principal means toward that end. This is stated in so many words in an account of the place of purity and of sanctification on the scale of the Torah’s requirements: R. Pinhas b. Yair says, ‘Heedfulness leads to (hygienic) cleanliness, cleanliness leads to cultic cleanness, cultic cleanness leads to abstinence, abstinence leads to holiness, holiness leads to modesty, modesty leads to the fear of sin, the fear of sin leads to piety, piety leads to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit leads to the resurrection of the dead, and the resurrection of the dead comes through Elijah, blessed be his memory. Amen.’ (Mishnah-Tractate Sotah 9:15). What we see, therefore, is that there is an integral connection between purity - which invariably means the purity of the cult, the Temple, and the priesthood of Israel - and sanctification. [...] Sanctification thus means two things: first, distinguishing Israel in all its dimensions from the world in all its ways; second, establishing the stability, order, regularity, predictability and reliability of Israel in the world of nature and supernature, in particular at moments and in contexts of danger. Danger means instability, disorder, irregularity, uncertainty and betrayal. [...] The purity of the priesthood therefore symbolized the sanctification of all Israel. [...] The Temple was the font of life, the bulwark against death, and the purity of the priesthood formed the Temple’s guarantee of sanctification.” (Jacob Neusner, *Purity and the priesthood in the Hebrew Scriptures and Rabbinic tradition*, accessed March 15, 2011,

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccclergy/documents/rc_con_ccclergy_doc_010119_purity_en.html)

⁶ Cf. Anthony J. Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees in Palestinian Society: A Sociological Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans; Livonia, MI: Dove Booksellers c2001), 149-151.

⁷ Nicholas Thomas Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, vol. 2: *Christian Origins and the Question of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 388.

Since Leviticus linked the purity code to the Second Temple,⁸ to be pure was not only a condition for entering the Temple, but a manifestation of one's piety to God. The temple in the time of Jesus, Wright describes, "was the central symbol of Judaism, the location of Israel's most characteristic praxis, the topic of some of her most beautiful stories, the answer to her deepest questions, the subject of some of her most beautiful songs."⁹ However, Jesus showed through his actions that Israel, as the people of God, was too focused on those codes. Moreover, Israel "had turned inwards upon herself and was being not only disobedient, but dangerously disobedient,"¹⁰ to God's commandments.

According to Leviticus 21:1-2, Jewish priests were forbidden to touch a corpse with the exception of a close relative. Thus, the ritual codes were considered an end in themselves. Moreover, the implementation and fulfillment of these laws was considered the proper way to achieve eternal life. Fitzmyer notes that priests and Levites were supposed to avoid.¹¹ Ritual purity was required of priests every day; it was a purity for life. For Levites, though, ritual purity was required only during worship days.

2. A Negation of the Subject (an "I-it" Relationship)

Both the priest and the Levite avoided the half-dead man. They could have helped him, but it appeared that their purity code blinded them; it did not permit them to see this man beyond their religious laws. Therefore, the purity code did not permit these Jewish people to recognize the injured man as a neighbor, as a subject. It may be said that the priest and the Levite had an "I-It" relationship in a personal, social, and political way because of their purity code. Hence, their

⁸ Cf. Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Understanding Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism* (Jersey City, N.J.: KTVA Pub. House, 2003), 21-25

⁹ Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, vol. 2, 406.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 442.

¹¹ Cf. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (X-XXIV)*, 887.

religion could be understood as a “bourgeois religion”¹² because of their “apathy.” As such, this kind of religion was unable to express pathos, love, and compassion.

In this sense, considering this Lucan parable in the way of the discipleship, let us consider the following Metz’s question:

Are we living as disciples, or do we just believe in discipleship and, under the cloak of this belief in discipleship, continue in our old ways, the same unchanging ways? Do we show real love, or do we just love in love and under the cloak of belief in love remain the same egoist and conformist we have always been? Do we share the sufferings of others, or do we just believe in this sharing, remaining under the cloak of a belief in ‘sympathy’ as apathetic as ever?¹³

The parable of the Good Samaritan criticizes a religion that focuses on ritual codes and forgets what the Scriptures commands.

Jesus did not condemn either the priest’s actions or the Levite’s actions, but through these characters, he shows us a kind a piety without interruption¹⁴, without solidarity¹⁵, without comprise, without ethics, and without *praxis*. The Lucan Jesus shows us a religion which is not a religion of the double commandment of love; it is not embodied in the world of the poor, the suffering, and the non-person (the one who has lost his/her human dignity).

B. A SAMARITAN

The Samaritan’s *splanchnizomai* leads to action over and against the priest’s and Levite’s inaction. The Samaritan’s mercy is the turning point of the narrative because he restores the

¹² A “bourgeois religion” does not practice compassion, but only believes in compassion. (Cf. John K. Downey, *Love’s strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International), 47-48).

¹³ Johann Baptist Metz, *The Emergent Church: The Future of Christianity in a Postbourgeois World*, trans., Peter Mann (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 3.

¹⁴ According to Pham “Metz’s interruption is aimed at waking us up from our dreamy world and disrupt our apparently comfortable lives by forcing us to look around our world and see how destructive we can be when we are blind to the suffering of those around us.” (Bryan V. Pham, “Interruption,” in *Political Theology*, accessed November 9, 2010, <http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/metz/theo.html>. Cf. Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 19; 158.

¹⁵ For Metz, “solidarity is a category of assistance, of supporting and encouraging the subject in the face of that which threatens him or her most acutely and in the face of his or her suffering.” (Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 208).

dignity that the man had lost when was attacked by robbers. The Samaritan shows both merciful actions and the “spirit of love.”

1. Recognition and Transformation (an “I-Thou” Relationship)

The parable of the Good Samaritan informs us that one does not have a specific and categorized neighbor; rather, everyone makes himself/herself a neighbor by his/her merciful actions (see Chapter One: Conclusions). The Lucan Jesus shows that the greatest commandment is not limited by race, nationality or belief. He shows us a universal dimension of love through merciful actions. The Lucan Jesus sent the lawyer to practice what he preaches (*orthodoxia* and *orthopraxis*). He shows to the lawyer that neighbor is the one who proceeds compassionately toward another without any kind of distinction. For Jesus, the meaning of neighbor is beyond any human category. In this regard, the Samaritan’s merciful actions show us a human miracle, as Rahner says:¹⁶

the most sublime miracle of human compassion is this: He who is really compassionate loses himself, identifies himself with his brother in his need, dares to commit himself to the unknown. His freedom achieves its ultimate act of daring, that of abandoning himself [...] When scripture states that he who loves his neighbour fulfils the law then this is the ultimate truth, that which is true in virtue of the fact that God himself has become this neighbour. Thus every time we accept and love our neighbour we *ipso facto* accept and love in him him who is at once nearest to, and most remote from us.

Thus, the double commandment -“love God and your neighbor” through merciful actions- is surely the way of life and the way to inherit eternal life. It is clear that the Samaritan is presented as an example to be followed because his actions show us a kind of relationship (an “I-Thou” relationship) which focuses on humankind, on human dignity. The Samaritan was not

¹⁶ Karl Rahner, “The works of mercy and their reward,” in “Christian Virtues,” in *Further Theology of the Spiritual Life I*, vol. VII of *Theological Investigations*, trans., David Burke (London: Darton, Longman & Todd; New York: Herder & Herder, 1971), 273-274.

blinded by any code; rather, he recognized the injured and half-dead man as a subject who needs his help.

2. Compassion: the Experience of God in the Human Being

According to Walter, when the Lucan Jesus uses the verb *splanchnizomai* to describe the Samaritan's actions, he presents him as a human being who reminds us the mercy of God.¹⁷

In Luke 10:25-37, the Samaritan's actions show us the transcendence of the human heart when it opens itself to human suffering and lets itself be moved by the inhumanity of others. The same Jesus who says "be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36) presents this particular Samaritan as merciful and compassionate according to the heart of God. This Samaritan through his actions gains praise from Jesus for reaching out to a stranger, an alien, a victim of violence. The Samaritan becomes a model figure; a model of goodness, compassion, and solidarity with the suffering, the beaten, the forgotten, the rejected, the marginalized, and the poor; he becomes a paradigm.¹⁸ In this sense, this Lucan parable is close to Metz's theology, which reminds us of the sensitivity about Others' suffering (*memoria passionis: a memory of suffering*¹⁹, Jesus' passion in history and the passion of God's people throughout history). In this regard, Sobrino points out:

by their crude reality they [the poor, the suffering, the people who lost their dignity and their human condition] can produce conversion and compassion, and also truth and praxis of justice. By their multi-formed spirit, they can in various ways humanize the different forms of impure air that the spirit breathes. It isn't easy to determine the salvation that comes from the world of the poor. We can think of it in three forms: they offer us a way to overcome dehumanization, they offer positive elements of humanization and they invite us to universal solidarity.²⁰

¹⁷ N. Walter, "Splanchnizomai," in *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. III, eds., Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, trans. William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1990-c1993), 265.

¹⁸ Cf. William C. Spohn, *Go a Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 61-66.

¹⁹ Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 106.

²⁰ Jon Sobrino, "No Salvation Apart from the Poor," *Revista Envío* 309 (April, 2007), accessed April 30, 2010, <http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/3531>

The crude reality of the Other will produce in us conversion and s/he will save us if we open ourselves to them. Thus, we must develop a profound relationship with God in order to open our eyes to the suffering people, the suffering world.

II. ANTHROPOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE PARABLE

Part two, according to the categories of *otherness* and *affinity*, seeks to examine the paradox that emerges from the parable of the Good Samaritan. Also, it presents the doctrine of *image of God* to reflect on the restoration of the human dignity.

A. PARADOX AND “SAVING CATEGORIES”

The parable presents us with a paradox where Jesus’ invitation, “go and do likewise,” has a twofold movement: 1) to help the Other; 2) to allow oneself to be approached by him, even when one can give him nothing in return. In this process which is dialectical, both are saved. The Lucan Jesus teaches us that neighbor means a disposition to show compassion through merciful actions to all and receive them from all, beyond any social, cultural, racial, and religious differences. Thus, the term “neighbor” must be understood in a proper way, from the perspective of divine mercy. The neighbor, McFarland points out, “is not defined as the one in need, nor as the one who shows compassion to the needy. Instead, Jesus effectively dismisses the lawyer’s question and asks the reader to consider that the crucial anthropological issue is not the status of the other whom I face, but rather who I am.”²¹ Therefore, the parable places us within an anthropology, rather than Christology. From this perspective I would like to focus on the paradox of the parable, which will allow us to introduce the categories of *otherness* and *affinity* as saving categories that are working dialectically as the paradox does. These two categories and the

²¹ Ian A. McFarland, “Who is my neighbor?: The Good Samaritan as a Source for Theological Anthropology,” *Theology* 17 (January, 2001): 62.

paradox will be rooted in an “I-Thou” relationship that will allow to open ourselves to a relationship without bounds.

The Lucan Jesus stresses an “I-Thou” relationship (anonymous man - Good Samaritan), which goes beyond interpersonal relations by involving political and social relations. Therefore, Lucan anthropology would tell us something about the importance of this kind of relationship. If so, then Christianity is a relationship between God and humankind. From this profound relationship, believers will be moved by the compassion that is infused in their heart.²²

The Good Samaritan parable speaks to contemporary situations where we find both people who are dehumanized (anonymous and mugged man = poor) and people who are looking for salvation (lawyer = non-poor). Nonetheless, the relationship between them could be an “I-It” or an “I-Thou” relationship. The latter, which is stressed because the encounter with the Other demands recognizing him/her as a person and allows us to introduce the category of *otherness* as a “saving category.”²³

The category of *otherness* is the respect for the other as Other, as a subject, as a person. It permits both the poor and the non-poor to be saved in a “dialectical way,” in “inter-relationship,” where the Other (poor or non-poor) is seen as a subject (an “I-Thou” relationship), as a real human being and not as an object (an “I-It” relationship). Recalling the Good Samaritan’s actions, the Other is someone who brings to the poor the capacity to empower his life, and redeem him from oppression and human indignity. In this sense, Sobrino notes, “[the *otherness*] need not to be oppressive but can be empowerment, capacity to serve, and so capacity to save [...] They [the poor] are more interested in otherness being able to be power, service, and so

²² “...I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” (see Heb 8:10; Jer 31:33)

²³ Cf. Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator*, 87-88; 272-274.

salvation. Schematically, they hope that power will be service.”²⁴ However, this category is not enough for the poor and the suffering, so we need the category of *affinity* which is another “saving category.”²⁵ This category refers to compassion and mercy in favor of the human being who is in need, because s/he is a person. In this sense, Sobrino points out, “when together with otherness they show some sort of affinity, the poor of this world feel that something good has happened to them. In different words, affinity toward them is also saving and even liberating, even if the salvation it produces is distinct from the salvation that otherness as power can bring.”²⁶ Therefore, the experience of salvation comes from God dialectically; one is made possible by God’s *otherness*, the Other by God’s *affinity*.

Now, if we move into the Christ-event (incarnation-death-resurrection) with Sobrino we can add that the resurrection proves God’s radical *otherness* to humankind and reveals that God has the ability to achieve what, for humankind, is impossible: freedom and full salvation. In the resurrection, God’s *otherness* has appeared through the effectiveness of love. The cross proves God’s *affinity* with the victims. The cross is a real engagement with the neighbor who is suffering, the one who had lost his human dignity. Nothing in history has placed limits on God’s closeness. It is because of this closeness that the victims, the abandoned people on the metaphorical Jericho road, believe that the power of God is good news.²⁷

In contemporary society, the anonymous man, the poor are waiting for *otherness* who can empower and help them, they are hoping for salvation and liberation. The relationship with *otherness* needs the category of *affinity* to have the experience of liberation and real salvation; the experience that something good is to happen. Therefore, if the poor and the non-poor seek to

²⁴ Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator*, 272.

²⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 87-88; 272-274.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 273.

²⁷ Cf. Jon Sobrino, *La fe en Jesucristo: Ensayo desde las Víctimas* (El Salvador: UCA, 1999), 97.

be humanized by considering the Other as neighbor, as the Lucan Jesus teaches us, then they (poor and non-poor) will be saved because of their *affinity*.

Through the parable of the Good Samaritan the Lucan Jesus teaches the importance of restoring human dignity. In this parable we see an authentic humanization focusing on fulfillment of God's will: the double commandment "love God and love your neighbor." Hence, "the parable of the good Samaritan is concerned with how to respond rightly to God,"²⁸ response in which category of *affinity* will be relevant especially if we recall Jesus words "go and do likewise" (v. 37). Regarding this category, Sobrino observes:

Through the affinity produced by discipleship it can be meaningful to proclaim Jesus as Christ, as the revelation of true divinity and true humanity. In the language of the New Testament, it is God's plan that we should become 'children in the Son,' but if this is his plan it is possible and, if it is possible, then by becoming sons and daughters we attain affinity with the Son and can come to know him.²⁹

The Lucan Jesus presents a Samaritan who is merciful because he was not blinded either by any purity code or by any limitation in his understanding of the noun "neighbor." His reaction reveals categories of *otherness* and *affinity* through an "I-Thou" relationship. The Samaritan was saved as well as the anonymous man; each needed to be saved (in a dialectical way). Hence, when these two "saving categories" (*otherness* and *affinity*) take place together we find the fulfillment of the double commandment of love. In this way, the parable of the Good Samaritan presents an anthropology and theology (as well as an ethics) that lets God be God in human life rooted in an authentic human relationship ("I-Thou"). Therefore, a human being, who practices the double commandment of love will be able to forget himself and self-transcendent in favor of the Other because "love is able to pour itself out, seeks union with the other."³⁰ The parable

²⁸ Jon Sobrino, *Jesus the Liberator: A Historical-Theological Reading of Jesus of Nazareth*, trans., Paul Burns and Francis McDonagh (New York: Orbis, 1993), 190

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁰ Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Consider Jesus: Waves of Renewal in Christology* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 26.

reveals human nature which is “a finite reality [humanity] with a capacity for the infinite [divinity], a thirst for the infinite.”³¹ Therefore, it is possible to recognize the *otherness* of the Other only when closed systems (e.g., ritual and human laws) that dehumanize humankind are broken. At this point it may be suggested that the notion of *epikeia*, discussed in the next chapter, will give us some insights on the rightly interpretation of the law in order to correct dehumanizing systems which paradoxically points to sanctification. Then, to proceed ethically, according to the relational anthropology that emerge from the parable, we must recognize the Other as a subject and allow him/her to be subject-agent, without reducing him/her in an object.

Ethics rooted in the Good Samaritan parable will consider humankind in an “I-Thou” relationship which involves saving categories of *otherness* and *affinity*. This ethics is moved not only by a relationship between God and humankind (love God) but also by a relationship among humans as real persons, as real subjects (love your neighbor). In this sense, *affinity* will be a key category for understanding a total identification with the poor, the victims, and for restoring them and empowering them. As the anonymous man, the poor could be any person; therefore, an ethics based on this Lucan passage will reach beyond any cultural, religious and social differences, because salvation is for all humankind.

Glossing the double commandment of love Pope Benedict XVI remarks: “Love of God and love of neighbour are thus inseparable, they form a single commandment.”³² In this sense, we cannot say that to love God is a prerequisite to love our neighbor; on the contrary, the two commandments (love of God and love of neighbor) are working in “dialectic way” for restoring human dignity.

³¹ Johnson, *Consider Jesus*, 24.

³² Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas est*, n. 18, accessed March 13, 2011, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html

When believers are blinded by some purity code as the priest and the Levite were, then they separate the double commandment of love.³³ In such an arrangement, the love of God distracts people from their ethical tasks. By loving God and loving our neighbor we let God be God in our life through our actions. This kind of ethics demands a real encounter with the Other; furthermore, it is a “face-to-face” encounter that affects our being. The parable invites us to discover God who lives in the Other; if we do that then we will be able help our neighbor, and we will be worshiping God. Furthermore, this parable is presenting the “already” (in eschatological terms) because salvation is taking place in our context, right now in our authentic commitment with the Other, with the non-person, with the poor. Therefore, from the parable of the Good Samaritan emerges an ethics. Thus, a Christian ethics is an integral dimension of salvation; Christ followers cannot preach salvation without an ethics based in the double commandment of love. Believers are challenged to put themselves at the service of the resurrection, in the service of the reign of God, in the service of eschatological ideals: justice, peace, solidarity, the life of the weak, human dignity, and so forth. As Sobrino writes: “These partial ‘resurrections’ [eschatological ideals] can generate hope in the final resurrection, the conviction that God did indeed perform the impossible, gave life to one crucified and will give life to all the crucified [poor, non-persons].”³⁴ When believers “go and do likewise” (v. 37) they become virtuous and work for “partial resurrections” in their context and their actions generate hope in the *otherness* who is suffering.

³³ Let us recall here the “Textual Criticism” analysis in Chapter One. It was pointed out that, Luke 10:33 shows some disagreements in regard to participles *genomenos* (“present”) and *elthon* (“coming”). Most of the English versions bibles do not translate the participle *genomenos*. In this sense, according to Plummer the use of *genomenos* in v. 32 would describe the Levite who came up to the half-dead man quiet close, saw and passed on, while the priest saw the man and passed. By considering *genomenos* it is possible to argue that the Levite would be showing a “curious” *affinity* without *otherness*. In this regard, without *affinity*, Sobrino affirms, “God’s power in the resurrection would remain not only as *otherness* but as *pure otherness* and therefore ambiguous and, for the crucified, historically threatening” (Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator*, 88).

³⁴ Sobrino, *Christ the Liberator*, 49.

Thus, a virtue ethics rooted in the Good Samaritan parable is both God-centered and human-centered. In this sense, Schillebeeckx says:

Ethics without God-centred spirituality often becomes ‘graceless,’ in both senses of the word. In that case there is ethics without the element of love which brings happiness, in which love of God and human love are one and the same indivisible basic attitude or virtue. From a Christian perspective, love for our fellow human beings is at the same time a ‘divine virtue,’ a reflection of God’s love for humankind in specific human action.³⁵

Christ’s followers are called to tell the story of Jesus, recall his *dangerous memory* (“love God and love your neighbor” as yourself), walk in his footsteps and, in the power of the Spirit, struggle against the forces of death. These actions will shape the Christian character as well as Christian ethical understanding³⁶ that demands from us to correlate this story with our human context.

Thus, one will inherit eternal life not only by loving God but also by loving one’s neighbor who lost his/her human dignity and is waiting for someone who can help and redeem him/her from oppression and indignity.

Luke chapter 10 shows a relational anthropology and calls us to practice an authentic relationship with God and humankind. For Christ’s followers, Christian anthropology is a theological anthropology that concerns for humankind and its relationship with God and the Other. As believers and for Christian virtue ethics, it is important to know who we are. Therefore, the way of understanding humankind will influence every aspect of human life. This anthropology will become our horizon and *telos* where we can arrive one day as a fully human person. In this sense, Groome points out: “The human person is always both an individual self and yet turned toward ‘the other.’”³⁷ This theological anthropology challenges us to engage with

³⁵ Edward Schillebeeckx, *Church: The Human Story of God*, trans., John Bowden (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 31.

³⁶ Cf. Johnson, *Consider Jesus*, 63

³⁷ Thomas H. Groome, “A Good People: God’s Own Image and Likeness,” in *Educating for Life: A Spiritual Vision for Every Teacher and Parent* (Allen, Texas: T. More, c1998.), 73.

our context and to transform it according to the reign of God. This anthropology is an invitation to engage people as protagonists rather than as audience, as agents rather than dependents. This relational anthropology challenges us to build the reign of God in our context by restoring human dignity.

To love God demands from us to love our neighbor. Therefore, the double commandment of love calls us to social responsibilities that Christian faith demands (see James 2:17). In this sense, I would like to finish this section recalling Jesuit General Congregation 32 that says: “Christian salvation consists in an undivided love of the Father and of the neighbor and of justice. Since evangelization is proclamation of that faith which is made operative in love of others, the promotion of justice is indispensable to it.”³⁸

B. *IMAGE OF GOD*

According to book of Genesis human beings are created in the *image of God* (see Gn. 1:26). The Scripture teaches that both men and women are equal in the sight of God because they are both made in God’s image. Therefore everyone has the same dignity and status before God. Also, in the Scripture we can find that the summary of the Ten Commandment is “love God and love your neighbor” (see Mt 22:37; Mk 12:30; and Lk 10:27). According to this summary believers are invited into a deep relationship with God and humankind. Thus, Christian anthropology is theological in that it concerns humankind and its relationship with God and Others. Our human condition is essentially relational in which the recognition of the Other is required.

Christ followers are challenged to recognize the Other as neighbor, to begin an “I-Thou” relationship, which is a profound relational anthropology, where both “I” and “Thou” are subjects-agents relationship. This kind of relation opens us not only to the Other as individual but as *person* and opens us to the community of faith.

³⁸ Society of Jesus. *General Congregation 32*, d4. n. 77/28.

In the Good Samaritan parable we see that for Jesus, the Other who is half-dead is his most important concern. All the Good Samaritan's merciful actions were oriented to help this man. For Jesus, the human condition, salvation, and dignity are beyond any kind of particular situation (The Sabbath and man [see Mk 2:27]; human dignity restoration [see Lk 10:30-35]). For Jesus, as previously discussed, the term "neighbor" is uncategorized. Jesus recognizes the other as a *person* in this profound "I-Thou" relationship, which is rooted in a deep relationship with *Abba*, his Father. Jesus fulfills the double commandment of love because of his comprehension of humankind as the *image of God*, which affects all his life, and then he could recognize the presence of God in the Other.

If we are created as the *image of God*, then we are called to practice it through our relationship with God and Others. We must recognize the Other as a subject, as a person in an "I-Thou" relationship and treat all humans equals. As Keenan affirms, "while we recognize the priority of the love of God, we are also commanded to love our neighbors. Essential to understanding this command is that we love our neighbors not as objects of our devotion ['I-It'], but rather as subjects: that is, as person ['I-Thou']." Keenan continues "We can only love one another as subjects, just as God love us."³⁹ In this sense, it may be suggested that the corruption of this profound relationship with God and Others will be considered a sin, a rejection of participating in a life giving community. Countering such rejection, grace makes us free and responsible, disposing us to a deep and faithful relationship with God and the Other. Luke chapter 10 teaches us that we are always related to Others and responsible for them. In this regard, Gillemann notes, "When we love ourselves or our neighbor for the sake of God, we do not consider them merely as means to which we would refuse friendship, but we rather see them as

³⁹ Daniel Harrington and James F. Keenan. *Jesus and Virtue Ethics: Building Bridges between New Testament Studies and Moral Theology* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 86.

participations of the ultimate end, as images of God permitting them to be included in our love for Him.”⁴⁰ Thus, this theological anthropology becomes not only deeply relational, but also the *telos* of our fullness as human beings.

This relational anthropology challenges us to engage our own reality and transform it according to the reign of God as the Samaritan did. This anthropology demands ethical tasks by calling people to be participants rather than audience, agents rather than dependents. It is an invitation to restore the human dignity of the last and the least. Lucan Jesus’ understanding of neighbor falls under the divine mercy category. Therefore, as *image of God* our relationship with God and Others must engage the totality of our hearts, souls, strengths and minds (see Lk. 10:27), that is, our whole person. Luke chapter 10 highlights a relational anthropology that requires concrete acts by linking love and *praxis*, so the true measure of our love for God is our love for our neighbor (see 1 Jn 4:20b-21).

CONCLUSIONS

The Good Samaritan parable unveils a profound relational anthropology in which the recognition of Others as oneself is primary. The Other is considered as subject beyond any religious code. The Lucan Jesus presents a parable that is both God-centered and human-centered. In both cases, the parable demands an “I-Thou” relationship that bridges *ortodoxia* and *ortopraxis*. The parable roots its *praxis* as ethical task in love, i.e., a real and authentic relationship with God and our neighbor. Therefore, to make an ethical reflection we need an anthropology that agrees with Scriptures and God’s commands.

The paradox analyzed in chapter one shows how the Samaritan and the mugged man are saved in a dialectical way. To understand this dialectical movement it is important to point out

⁴⁰ Gérard Gillean, *The Primacy of Charity in Moral Theology*, trans. William F. Ryan and André Vachon (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1961, c1959), 116.

that the verb *splanchnizomai* as well as the Samaritan's actions reveal important feature of God's, his mercy. This paradox lets us introduce the saving categories *otherness* and *affinity*, and to reinforce the "I-Thou" relationship, and then a deep relational anthropology. To this anthropology the recognition of the Other as person and real subject is highlighted to restore the human dignity and human condition.

Relational anthropology demands not only recognition of the Other as neighbor, but as *image of God*. The double commandment of love demands an "I-Thou" relationship with God and the Other who may be poor or non-poor, believer or not believer, but s/he is a person, child and *image of God*.

The Lucan Jesus challenges us to "go and do likewise" (v. 37b) looking for the *image of God* who would bring us salvation. The Other as person, subject, and *image of God* becomes our end, our horizon, our *telos*.

The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches that the true measure of our love for God is our love for our neighbor, who is beyond all human categories. If we have not absorbed such an anthropology from the parable, we are danger of becoming priest and Levite, believers only in theory and far away from the Samaritan's merciful actions.

CHAPTER THREE

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON THE GOOD SAMARITAN PARABLE

In the parable of the Good Samaritan a priest and a Levite on the Jericho road see a man suffering, but they do not help him; moreover, they go by without stopping. They appear to love God, but they fail to love their neighbor. Jesus praises the Good Samaritan who stops and helps the mugged man. As Jesus relates it (Lk 10:33), a Samaritan saw the stricken man's need, had compassion, and restored his human dignity.

The third chapter tries to integrate the notion of *epikeia* with the practice of Johann Baptist Metz's spirituality with stress on obedience to God and response to human suffering. This chapter attempts to bridge the divide between spirituality and ethics and also it will try to show how Scripture can be used to "perfect the discipline of moral theology" (see *Optatam totius* n. 16). This chapter seeks to connect the actions of the Good Samaritan based on an exegetical and hermeneutical approaches and anthropological reflection presented in previous chapters with both the notion of *epikeia* and Metz's spirituality.

Part one presents an approach to the notion of *epikeia* based on the perspectives of Saint Thomas Aquinas and some modern moral theologians such as Josef Fuchs, Charles E. Curran, and Klauss Demmer. This part focuses on Aquinas's perspective of *epikeia* as virtue in contrast to Francisco de Suarez's notion of dispensation. Finally, part one will try to present the Good Samaritan actions as *epikeia*.

Part two presents Metz's category of spirituality, namely, *poverty of spirit*. This part presents both recognition of the Other as a real subject and *praxis* as important themes in Metz's theology. Furthermore, part two will attempt to integrate Luke 10:25-37, Metz's spirituality, and *epikeia* with the narrative of suffering and the notion of neighbor.

I. THE NOTION OF *EPIKEIA* IN THE CATHOLIC TRADITION

The term *epikeia* is found in the Scriptures, the Greek philosophers, and along the history of moral theology. The term *epikeia* is derived from the Greek word *epieikeia*, meaning: suitability, clemency, reasonableness, or moderate. Etymologically, *epikeia* derived from “*epi*,” which means “above,” and from “*dikaion*,” which means “justice.” In its practical sense *epikeia* describes something moderate or fitting.¹

In the Scriptures the word *epieikeia* occurs several times. In the Old Testament the noun *epieikeia* and the adjective *epieikes* are used to describe God’s disposition as a Ruler where he displays kindness, goodness as King (see 1 Sam 12:22; Dan 3:42; Ps 86:5; Wis 12:18). It can be used of the actions of earthly kings (see Est 3:13; 8:13; 2 Macc 9:27; 3 Macc 3:15; 7:6) and of men who are close to God like the prophet Elisha (see 2 Kgs 6:3), or the righteous as the son of God (see Wis 2:19).² In the New Testament as a noun occurs in Acts 24:4; 2 Cor 10:1, and the adjective *epieikes* is found in the following passages: Phlp 4:5; 1 Tim 3:3; Titus 3:2; James 3:17, and 1 Pet 2:18. According to Preisker,

in 2 Cor 10:1 Paul proposes the “meekness” of Christ as a model. As king, Christ has the gentleness that only one with full power may display (Phil. 2:5ff.). *Epieikeia* is thus a complement of heavenly majesty. The weak want to assert their dignity; Christ, having divine authority, shows saving clemency. The community shares his glory and should thus display the same *epieikeia*. [...] As the governor, Felix ought to show a clemency befitting his high office (Acts 24:4), Christians should be *epieikeis* in virtue of their divinely given calling.³

A. *EPIKEIA* IN GREEK PHILOSOPHERS

Epikeia is not strictly a Catholic term, although it has a distinct place in Catholic theology.

Epikeia was treated in Ancient Greece among others by Plato and Aristotle, and in Scholasticism

¹ Cf. Lawrence Joseph Riley, *The History, Nature and Use of Epikēia in Moral Theology* (Washington, Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1948), 9.

² Cf. Preisker, “*Epieikeia*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. II (Δ–H), eds. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans., Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1964-c1974), 588-590.

³ *Ibid.*, 588-590

by theologians like Saint Thomas Aquinas and Francisco Suarez. All these authors have different points of view on *epikeia*, yet Aristotle's and Aquinas's are closely related. Aquinas and Suarez are the most influential theologians when we talk about *epikeia*. Modern moral theologians go back in a direct or indirect way to these Greek and Scholastic authors when they discuss *epikeia*.

The notion of *epikeia* in the history of the Church follows two different paths: one based on Aquinas's point of view and the other on Suarez's perspective. The understanding of *epikeia* in these Scholastic theologians has its roots in Aristotle's and Plato's comprehension of the universal law and human reality, respectively. Thus, "the question of *epikeia* arose from the conflict between universal law and changeable human reality, both of which exist in the concrete at the same time."⁴ This conflict will be constantly present in the discussions of moral theologians.

Plato, in general, considered the world as a deficient imitation of an ideal one, and this way of considering the earthly reality influenced his views of the nature and function of laws. In this context, Fuchs indicates that Plato, "considering above all the principles of law (as idea), held that every adaptation to changeable reality does violence to the law."⁵ To Plato, therefore, the concrete reality must be adapted and perfectly conformed to some universal rule.

Aristotle agrees with Plato about the universality of the law in its formulation and scope. However, concrete reality cannot perfectly conform to some universal rule; rather, the rule must be adapted to reality. Fuchs says that Aristotle considered *epikeia* as a virtue that "creates a complete correspondence between the principle of law and changing human reality; thus *epikeia*

⁴ Josef Fuchs, "Epikeia Applied to Natural Law?," in *Personal Responsibility and Christian Morality*, trans. William Cleves et al., (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press; Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1983), 185; Cf. Steven O'Hala, *Epieikeia and Contemporary Moral Theology in the Light of Hans-Georg Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Roma: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1997), 173.

⁵ Fuchs, "Epikeia Applied to Natural Law?," 185.

is the virtue which properly accounts for the correspondence.”⁶ To make possible this correspondence, *epikeia* needs the guidance of the virtue of prudence⁷ to correct the law when it is not flexible because of its universal character. Therefore, *epikeia* goes beyond the legal field, and it extends toward morality. The use of *epikeia* is not considered a reduction of the law; rather it is a correction of the positive law when it fails. In the Aristotelian sense, *epikeia* is a correction of the law when it fails by reason of its universality, i.e., *epikeia* is the correction of a defective law in terms of universal legal justice.⁸ Edouard Hamel notes that Aristotle elevated the term *epikeia* to the level of moral virtue; *epikeia* is a subjective part of justice, whose object is the correct application of the law.⁹

Lawrence Joseph Riley summarizes Aristotle’s point of view on *epikeia* as follows:¹⁰ 1) *Epikēia* is a correction of the law, where the law is deficient by reason of its universal scope. *Epikēia* may not be used to correct every single defect that may arise in the law, but only the defect which arises by reason of the law’s universality. 2) *Epikēia* may be used to effect a good not only for the community (the common good), but even for individuals. 3) No mention is made of the necessity of recourse to someone in authority before *epikeia* is used. 4) *Epikēia* is concerned only with human law (positive law). Aristotle’s comprehension of *epikeia* will have considerable influence on subsequent Christian theologians such as Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas.

⁶ Fuchs, “*Epikēia* Applied to Natural Law?,” 185.

⁷ “Prudence helps us to understand ourselves and our capabilities as moral agents, as well as the context in which we find ourselves. As the virtue of practical reason, it guides us in making the actual judgment and in determining the appropriate means for realizing well our decisions. Without prudence there is no right moral judgment, no right moral action, and no right moral living.” (James F. Keenan, “New Foundations for Moral Reasonings, 1970-89,” in *A History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century: From Confessing Sins to Liberating Consciences* (London; New York: Continuum, 2010), 153-154.)

⁸ Cf. Edouard Hamel, “*Epikēia*,” in *Diccionario Enciclopédico de Teología Moral*, Leandro Rossi and Ambrogio Valsecchi eds., trans. Ezequiel Varona, et al., 5th ed. (Madrid: Paulinas, 1986), 300; Cf. Riley, *The History, Nature and Use of Epikēia in Moral Theology*, 9.

⁹ Cf. Hamel, “*Epikēia*,” 301.

¹⁰ Cf. Riley, *The History, Nature and Use of Epikēia in Moral Theology*, 23-26

Aristotle disagrees with Plato's perspective of *epikeia* when this virtue is used under exceptional cases and emergencies. In this regard, Mahoney compares:

For Plato the exception is a deviation and a deficiency, due to the imperfect way in which worldly reality embodies and represents the ideal, whereas for Aristotle the exception, far from weakening the law, actually improves and corrects it. For Aristotle it is the law itself which is inherently weak and imperfect, precisely because it is universal and general in its formulations.¹¹

Therefore, *epikeia* for Aristotle is a virtue that makes possible the correction and improvement of the law's universality according to the circumstances and the context of the individuals.

Aristotle's understanding of *epikeia* does not mean a benign relaxation of the law. *Epikeia* is, for Aristotle, the realization of a more perfect justice by considering the concrete particularity; *epikeia* involves the correction of the law in cases where circumstances are different from those for which the law was conceived; *epikeia* is, therefore, the bent of mind which, while recognizing the authority of law, is aware of concrete situations.

B. AQUINAS'S UNDERSTANDING OF *EPIKEIA*

The notion of *epikeia* developed by Aristotle, mainly in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (book V, 10), enters into Catholic moral discourse with Albert the Great. He was the first to dedicate himself to a formal treatment of *epikeia*.¹² Like Aristotle, Albert refers to *epikeia* in those situations in which the positive law is defective in its application by reason of its universality. The law because of its universality cannot be applied to all occasions and situations of human conduct in community. If the universality of the law is the reason for the deficiency of the law, then we need *epikeia* to properly interpret the human law in its context.¹³ In this sense, I can understand when Cessario explains that Albert supplements Aquinas's etymological definition of *epikeia* (i.e.,

¹¹ John Mahoney, "The Language of the Law," in *The Making of Moral Theology: A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition* (Oxford, OX: Clarendon Press; New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 235-236

¹² Cf. Hamel, "Epiqueia," 301.

¹³ Cf. Romanus Cessario, "Epiqueia and the Accomplishment of the Just," in Simon G. Harak, ed., *Aquinas and Empowerment: Classical Ethics for Ordinary Lives*, (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1996), 177.

Epieikeia derived from “*epi*,” which means “above,” and from “*dikaion*,” which means “justice” “*Epieikeia*” means “that which surpasses justice”)¹⁴ and offers a more proper definition: *epikeia* is a “guiding of law in those matters in which law is defective because of its universality.”¹⁵

THOMAS AQUINAS

Aristotle’s *epikeia*, as previously pointed out, was introduced into Scholastic theology by Albert the Great. Next, we have Aquinas’s understanding of *epikeia*, which is close to Albert’s. For Aquinas, *epikeia* is the virtue that guides a person in those cases where the law fails because of its universality. In determinate cases, Aquinas writes, “it is good to set aside the letter of the law and to follow the dictates of justice and the common good. This is the object of ‘*epikeia*’ which we call equity. Therefore, it is evident that ‘*epikeia*’ is a virtue”¹⁶ Here, in *ST IIa IIae, q. 120, a. 1*, Aquinas treats *epikeia* as a synonym of equity.¹⁷ *Epikeia* is the response to a higher law, which is the law of justice in favor of the common good. *Epikeia* is the subject’s judgment about a particular case, and not about the law itself. Aquinas demands the use of *epikeia* only for interpretation in doubtful cases “where it is not allowed to set aside the letter of the law.”¹⁸ In *ST IIa IIae, q. 120, a. 2*, Aquinas treats *epikeia* as a kind of justice. It is a subjective part of justice. What is more, it is better than legal justice, he writes, “since legal justice is subject to the direction of ‘*epikeia*.’ Hence, ‘*epikeia*’ is by way of being a higher rule of human actions.”¹⁹ Aquinas’s perspective of *epikeia* follows Aristotle’s perspective, which is founded on the fact that positive law is sometimes deficient by reason of the universality of its expression.

¹⁴ Cf. Cessario, “*Epieikeia* and the Accomplishment of the Just,” 177.

¹⁵ *Loc. Cit.*

¹⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIa IIae, q. 120, a. 1

¹⁷ Riley notes that for Aquinas *aequitas* and *epikeia* are not always necessary identical; the distinction between *aequitas* as *mitigatio juris* and *aequitas* as *correctio legis* (*epikeia*) is not all that clear in Aquinas. This is primarily because Aquinas tends to distinguish *epikeia*, not from *aequitas* as *mitagatio juris*, but rather from *aequitas* as justice of equality. (Cf. Riley, *The History, Nature and Use of Epikeia in Moral Theology*, 31-32; 51.) The thesis focuses on *epikeia* as the correct interpretation of the law.

¹⁸ Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIa IIae, q. 120, a. 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, q. 120, a. 2.

Nonetheless, Aquinas links the virtue of *epikeia* to the common good and to the good of the individual when the latter contributes to the good of society. Thus, Aquinas's *epikeia* focuses more on the common good than the individual's good.

FRANCISCO DE SUAREZ

Riley reminds us that no theologian treated the concept of *epikeia* so comprehensively as Suarez did.²⁰ In fact, subsequent moral theologians depend almost entirely, in a direct or indirect way, on Suarez's point of view. Suarez explains *epikeia* with regard to the fact that laws are sometimes deficient because of the universality of their expression.²¹ Consequently, human law must be understood to exclude (as a dispensation) those cases where observance of the rule would be unjust and unreasonable.

Regarding positive law and *epikeia*, Fuchs notes that Suarez posits three basic cases where *epikeia* could be invoked:²²

a) [impossibility of the law] if the positive law, set out in words, is 'beyond our strength' in a certain case, or impossible; b) [inhumanity of the law] if the law in a particular instance is not beyond one's strength, or impossible, but is exceedingly difficult or 'intolerable,' i.e., 'inhuman'; c) [not binding according to the mind of the legislator] "if the nonobservation is done 'according to the benign intention of the legislator' (as if he were present here and now).

The latter case is identified most often with *epikeia* by subsequent theologians who agree with casuistry and manuals of moral theology.²³ For these theologians, *epikeia* can only be understood as the benign interpretation of the mind of the legislator since the law is essentially an exercise of his will; even more, the law achieves its validity through the lawmaker's will. Therefore, we have a voluntarist perspective. However, we recognize that Scholastic tradition, through

²⁰ Cf. Riley, *The History, Nature and Use of Epikēia in Moral Theology*, 67.

²¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 68

²² Fuchs, "Epikēia Applied to Natural Law?," 195; see also Hamel, "Epikēia," 303; Riley, *The History, Nature and Use of Epikēia in Moral Theology*, 73. Notice that the words in brackets do not belong to us; they were taken from my personal notes of Natural Law classes (BCSTM, Spring 2010).

²³ Cf. Riley, *The History, Nature and Use of Epikēia in Moral Theology*, 73

Aquinas, presents us with the need of *epikeia* as the intellectual discernment used for the proper application of law.²⁴ In this way, *epikeia* calls for believers to discern the inner meaning of a human law in order to obey it intelligently in the majority of cases. *Epikēia* could work as a “light” that orients us when we need to go beyond the law in a reasonable way in exceptional cases.

In summary, Aquinas and Suarez considered *epikeia* in two separate ways. For Aquinas, *epikeia* is not only a positive virtue, but also an exercise of reason that should be practiced. This virtue is “aimed at perfecting the law itself, and not only at legitimating isolated dispensation from the law.”²⁵ Later, for Suarez, *epikeia* is understood in terms of dispensation from the law under a determinate set of circumstances. Thus, Suarez seems to maintain that the *telos* of *epikeia* is the good of the individuals as such, and not just as members of society. *Epikēia* is seen not only as a part of justice, but as a virtue that protects and furthers the lives of individuals.²⁶ Let us note here that one of the most important differences between Suarez and Aquinas refers to the *telos* of the virtue of *epikeia*. For Aquinas, as previously pointed out, the *telos* of *epikeia* is the common good (he restricts the use of *epikeia* in those cases where the law is against the common good), while for Suarez, it is the good of the individuals.

C. MODERN MORAL THEOLOGIANS ON *EPIKEIA*

In recent years, it is possible to find some modern moral theologians like Josef Fuchs, John Mahoney, Charles E. Curran, and Klauss Demmer who recall and discuss the notion of *epikeia*. They are influenced in a direct or indirect way by the perspectives on *epikeia* of Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas, and Suarez. All of them take distance from Suarez’s notion of *epikeia*. Modern moral

²⁴ Cf. Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q. 120, aa. 1 and 2.

²⁵ James T. Bretzke, *A Morally Complex World: Engaging Contemporary Moral Theology* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, c2004), 227.

²⁶ Cf. Fuchs, “*Epikēia* Applied to Natural Law?,” 187.

theologians follow not only Aquinas's, but also Aristotle's understanding of *epikeia*. Their discussions are perhaps part of a wider renewal effort in Catholic theology after Vatican II.²⁷ In this regard, let us note that in 1940 Richard Egenter had already presented an article on *epikeia*.²⁸ Egenter's article sought to recover the broader meaning assigned to this virtue first by Greek philosophers and later by Aquinas and Suarez, as previously pointed out. According to Hamel, after Egenter's article many moral theologians abandoned Plato's point of view of *epikeia* and have gone back not only to Aquinas's understanding, i.e., *epikeia* as a virtue, but also to Aristotle's perspective. Egenter emphasized the meaning of *epikeia* as the higher form of justice that guides *praxis*; he placed *epikeia* within social justice.²⁹ In this regard, we might well think that Egenter's article was an important turning point in the historical process of the meaning and application of *epikeia*.

McBrien offers us a definition of *epikeia*:

Epikēia means that a law need not be obeyed when its observance would be detrimental to the common good or the good of individuals. Its use does not imply that the law itself is invalid or that it can be disregarded at will. *Epikēia* is a principle of moral reasoning that is only applicable in specific instances under circumstances of necessity or urgency. *Epikēia* is opposed to legalism, which makes the observance of the letter of the law always primary, even over demands of justice.³⁰

This section will not discuss McBrien's definition; nonetheless, it may be affirmed that this definition is close to the perspectives on *epikeia* of Aristotle, Aquinas, and subsequent moral theologians who agree with them. Consequently, this definition takes distance from Suarez's point of view on *epikeia* and those moral theologians who agree with him.

²⁷ In this renewal process, it may be noted that *Optatam Totius* is a significant document when it points out that "Special care must be given to the perfecting of moral theology." *Optatam Totius* n. 16

²⁸ Cf. Steven O'Hala, *Epikēia and Contemporary Moral Theology in the Light of Hans-Georg Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics* (Roma: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1997), 163; Cf. Hamel, "Epikēia," 301.

²⁹ Cf. O'Hala, *Epikēia and Contemporary Moral Theology in the Light of Hans-Georg Gadamer's Philosophical Hermeneutics*, 163.

³⁰ Richard P. McBrien, ed., *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (New York: HarperCollins, c1995), 471.

The purpose of this chapter is not to describe the perspectives of modern moral theologians who treat the notion of *epikeia* such as Fuchs, Mahoney, Curran, Demmer, and O'Hala, among others; rather I will bring into the discussion some aspects of these scholars on *epikeia* in order to answer the focus questions of this thesis. Modern moral theologians continue dealing with universality of the law and its applications in particular situations; they agree with Aristotle in that the universal law has to adjust to the changeable human reality; they agree with Aquinas regarding the common good and somehow with Suarez regarding the good of individuals. Modern moral theologians consider *epikeia* always under here and now situations; they appeal to hermeneutics, and some of them like Fuchs and Demmer apply *epikeia* not only to positive law, but also to natural law.

Let us note here that that *epikeia* is not only part of justice, but also it looks for a higher justice in particular situations in agreement to God's law: "love God and love your neighbor as yourself." In this context, I would like to bring into the discussion the importance of human dignity, which is grounded in God's law and righteousness as well as in the doctrine of the *image of God*. Thus, by focusing on human dignity I will discuss how *epikeia* works in the parable of the Good Samaritan to correct a religious law, namely purity code.

D. QUESTIONS OF USING THE VIRTUE OF *EPIKEIA* IN THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

As discussed in the previous chapter, the Good Samaritan parable unveils two different reactions. The reactions of the first two characters, the priest and the Levite, are in disagreement with the double commandment of love while the Samaritan's reactions are in agreement with God's law. God's commandment goes beyond any human law and looks for the fullness of human beings

and human dignity. From this perspective I will introduce the virtue of *epikeia* and discuss it within the framework of the parable of the Good Samaritan.

The term *epikeia* does not occur in Luke 10:25-37, but rather appears in other passages (see above); however, I find “hermeneutical tools” such as mercy, compassion, recognition, and human dignity that allows us to unveil this virtue from the parable of the Good Samaritan. Our understanding of *epikeia* takes distance from *epikeia* as a dispensation (Francisco de Suarez); on the contrary, it will be directly related to the points of view of modern moral theologians, mentioned above, who follow Aquinas’s and Aristotle’s understandings of *epikeia*.³¹ Let us recall here some differences between Aquinas and Suarez. Aquinas regards law as an expression of reason, while Suarez considers the law more as the expression of the lawgiver’s will. For Suarez the spirit of the law is the legislator’s will by which the lawmaker forces the subject to obey blindly. According to Aquinas *epikeia* is the interpretation of the law while for Suarez it is the exception or dispensation of the law. *Epikēia*, to Aquinas, is the ability to interpret the law; it is an improvement of the law, so *epikeia* is close to prudence. He thinks, *epikeia* is a genuine virtue and exercise of reason; it is not a dispensation from the law (Suarez), but the correct

³¹ Gula reminds us that Aquinas and Suarez are commonly identified with rationalist and voluntarist perspectives, respectively. On the one hand, the voluntarist perspective interprets the two elements that belong to the lawmaker strictly, i.e., “promulgated” and “competent authority.” (Richard M. Gula, “Law and Obedience,” in *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Christian Morality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 256.) The voluntarist perspective gives all the power to the lawmaker and none to the individuals; it focuses on the one who has authority to determine what is right or wrong. (Cf. Richard M. Gula, “Law and Obedience,” in *Reason Informed by Faith: Foundations of Christian Morality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 256). According to Mahoney, “Suarez, to be sure, is not a pure voluntarist, recognizing as he does that the intellect has an important part to play in assessing the various courses open to the lawgiver, but the final act of choice is an act of the will, and the motive force of the law (as it originates in the lawgiver) belongs to the will. The will is the source of movement, not only for the person in whom it resides but also for others whom he is to command.” (Mahoney, “The Language of the Law,” 238). On the other hand, the rationalist perspective separates the law from the lawmaker’s will. According to Gula, this perspective “has interpreted strictly the elements pertaining to law (‘reason’ and ‘common good’), whereas it has interpreted broadly the elements pertaining to the lawgiver (‘promulgated’ and ‘competent authority’)” (Gula, “Law and Obedience,” 256.) So if we consider obedience to the law, the rationalist perspective will be different from the voluntarist perspective since with reason as the basic criterion for good law, any blind obedience to the lawmaker has no place in the rationalist perspective. *Epikēia*, under the influence of the rationalist perspective, is not a dispensation from the law, but is the correct application of a law oriented toward the common good and God’s law.

application of a limited law oriented toward the common good, so he situated *epikeia* within the context of the virtue of justice. Thus, it can rightly be said that exercising the virtue of *epikeia* is morally superior to the mere observance of the letter of the law.

Having recalled some main differences between Aquinas's and Suarez's perspectives on *epikeia* let us keep in mind that modern moral theologians are not only agree with Aquinas's *epikeia* and go back to Aristotle's point of view in this regard, but also they bring into the discussion themes like hermeneutics (Demmer and O'Hala); the stress on the individual responsibility and freedom in our society (Curran); and the "true actualization" of the norm (Fuchs).

According to Fuchs, *epikeia* is the correct application of the law, which points to the common good. In this sense, Gula affirms, "Exercising the virtue of *epikeia* is morally superior to the mere observance of the letter of the law. It is realistic about the inability of law both to cover every contingency and to define the full measure of moral responsibility. *Epikēia* enables each person to respond to the demands of the Spirit by discerning the inner meaning, or spirit, of the law before making the final decision in a concrete situation."³² Gula emphasizes the concrete situation where and when the law will be applied. Thus, the norms having been written to cover most cases cannot be applied to the infinite variety of concrete and specific situations. It may be noted that practical and effective norms that determine a virtuous behavior depend on the human experience and on the Gospel.³³ Therefore, the application of the law must consider the context as well the concrete situation of human being, which is here and now. Therefore, we need to

³² Gula, "Law and Obedience," 258.

³³ Here, *Gaudium et Spes* n. 46 is important to be mentioned, especially when it says that human needs need to be considered "in light of the Gospel and of human experience." Therefore, the Gospel and the human experience bring us the context for moral reasoning as well as to build up a virtuous behavior according to God's will, namely, the reign of God.

interpret the law in its context.³⁴ In this regard, Fuchs seems to highlight the importance *epikeia* as interpretation. For him “*epikeia*-interpretation” refers to particular norms of natural law and concrete norms of behavior. In fact, he writes, *epikeia*-interpretation “means nothing else than discovering and trying to put into practice the true moral purpose of the natural law (in the strict sense of natural law, i.e., nonwritten) in those not infrequent cases where the norm is deficient.”³⁵ For Fuchs what is really important is not the norm itself, but its “true actualization”³⁶ in any given concrete situation. By “true actualization” Fuchs refers to the non-written natural law, which right reason provides.³⁷

Fuchs points out that some major theologians say that moral law is not properly concerned with what is universal, but with what is concrete. In this sense, he says, “norms which are mistakenly formulated as ‘universal’ must be ‘corrected’ in their concrete application so as to preserve the true purpose of natural law; thus it seems that they must be ‘rendered’ correct.”³⁸ For Fuchs, therefore, moral law must be contextualized; we need to know our place and time, namely, our here and now.

Concerning the natural law (“human morality” or “the morality of man”³⁹), Fuchs takes Suarez’s cases that both justify and authorize the use of *epikeia* with regard to positive law (see above) and applies those cases analogously to suggest dispensation or perhaps reformulation of the norm in the following cases: “a) if the observation of an established obligation becomes ridiculous; b) if the fulfillment of a stated norm becomes somewhat ‘harmful’; c) if it becomes altogether incongruous; d) if it becomes impossible; e) if the mere observance of the norms

³⁴ Cf. Josef Fuchs, “*Epikeia* Applied to Natural Law?,” 185-199.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 192.

³⁶ *Loc. Cit.*

³⁷ Right reason is “the basic moral faculty of discernment. Each human person, through a process of rational reflection, can come to a correct moral understanding of the rightness and wrongness of moral actions, etc.” (Bretzke, *A Morally Complex World*, 240.)

³⁸ Fuchs, “*Epikeia* Applied to Natural Law?,” 193.

³⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 185.

becomes insufficient in a given case.”⁴⁰ These five cases would involve the application of not just an individual’s use of the right reason, but also the community’s. Moreover, it will be important for the discernment of the individual, but especially of the community in its context. The context, which is here and now, should confront us with concrete realities that demand concrete *praxis* from us, .e.g., the Good Samaritan’s actions. In this sense, I agree that moral decisions always occur in determinate here and now situations. Regarding context and right reason, Graham says, “*Recta ratio* cannot be ascertained by knowing what is right generally, what was right in the past, or what is right in the vast majority of cases. *Recta ratio* corresponds exclusively to what is objectively right in this situation, in the here-and-now constituted by the totality of circumstances.”⁴¹ For Fuchs, therefore, *epikeia* is a way of applying the norm more fully and of making less severe the objective harm and other consequences resulting from the rigid interpretation of the law without context.⁴² Fuchs wants to go to the meaning of the law rather than the will of the legislator. He disagrees with Suarez. Finally, for Fuchs, *epikeia* is to know the fullness of the law as what is the right thing to do, namely, the right way to live.

Mahoney is another moral theologian who discusses and follows Aristotle, Aquinas, and Fuchs perspectives on *epikeia*. For Mahoney, “*epikeia* is not strictly an interpretation of law, nor is it presumed dispensation from it [Suarez], but it is rather the interpretation of the mind and will of him who made the law. It is therefore not a violation of law.”⁴³ For Mahoney *epikeia* is a virtue that helps us to interpret the spirit of the law, so he disagrees with Suarez’s understanding of *epikeia* in the observance of the law. *Epikieia*, in Suarez’s perspective as discussed earlier, is a dispensation of the law, a justification for not obeying the literal sense of the law based on the

⁴⁰ Fuchs, “*Epikieia* Applied to Natural Law?,” 195.

⁴¹ Mark E. Graham, Josef Fuchs on Natural Law (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, c2002), 185.

⁴² Cf. Cristina L.H. Traina, *Feminist Ethics and Natural Law: The End of the Anathemas* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, c1999), 187.

⁴³ Mahoney, “The Language of the Law,” 232.

presumed intention and equity of the lawmaker.⁴⁴ Thus, if we consider that *epikeia* helps to interpret the spirit of the law, then one might say that *epikeia* is a supreme virtue. In this regard, Mahoney notes,

Epicheia, in the teaching of Aristotle and Aquinas, is a virtue, and as such it is a quality of human judgment to be cultivated rather than, as in the more Platonic and Suarezian approach, a regrettable necessity to be carefully hedged about and constrained. It is the acknowledgement that reality cannot all be pigeonholed, that what distinguishes a thing is not necessarily an imperfection or a deviation, but frequently that which gives it a particular dignity; that general laws are good and necessary for the functioning of any social organization, but that occasions can, and do, arise which they have not foreseen and in which it is not good that a law be observed in a purely literal compliance with its requirements.⁴⁵

We see that Mahoney disagrees with Suarez's perspective of *epikeia*. Mahoney follows the perspective of Aristotle, Aquinas, and Fuchs on *epikeia*. As we know, for Aquinas *epikeia* is a virtue, so it does not excuse people from the law; it seeks to figure out what the laws really want. Mahoney's understanding of *epikeia* is teleological: his perspective on *epikeia* is trying to articulate different laws toward the *telos*, which is the fullness of the spirit of the law. Therefore, Mahoney understands *epikeia* more positively than Aristotle, Aquinas, and Fuchs. For Mahoney, *epikeia* seems to be a major virtue that one need to practice; it is not about forgiveness, excuse, or dispensation. *Epikeia* is a virtue that one need to develop in order to become people who are faithful, not to the law itself or the legislator's will, but to the spirit of the law, the greater justice according to God's law and will. *Epikeia* orients us through the question "What should we do?" to the question "What should we do here and now in a concrete reality?" Thus, the virtue of *epikeia* is the ability to interpret norms and practice them according to the spirit of the law. *Epikeia* is not just the meaning of the law.

⁴⁴ Cf. Mahoney, "The Language of the Law," 232.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 242.

Curran, another modern moral theologian, discusses *epikeia* in the context of the post-Vatican II period and the new sociological realities.⁴⁶ Curran seems to highlight the Church's relation with the secular society, where the stress is on the freedom and responsibility of the individual. In this context Curran emphasizes that people in secular society are citizens and not subjects. He points out, "The whole structure of modern society depends upon the creative contributions of individuals and institutions within society. Law contributes only a small part to the common good of society."⁴⁷ For Curran, *epikeia* is one built-in safeguard, which requires greater emphasis in our present time.

Curran, among other moral theologians, returns to Suarez's and Aquinas's notions when referring to *epikeia*. Regarding the influence of Suarez's perspective, Curran affirms, "Most manuals of theology actually adopt a very restricted and Suarezian understanding of *epikeia*."⁴⁸ Here Curran is referring to casuistry. Recalling Aquinas, he says, "*Epikieia* has been called the crown of legal justice and the virtue of the spirit of the law. For the Christian, *epikeia* cannot be merely the wish to free oneself from a particular obligation, but rather *epikeia* must be a demand of the higher law -the law of the Spirit."⁴⁹ *Epikieia*, therefore, is not just any virtue but an important one that Christians need to develop and practice according to God's law, which is summarized by Jesus in the double commandment of love (see Mt 22:37-39).

For Curran, Aquinas's understanding of *epikeia* is valid for contemporary situations; however, it needs "some adjustments because of the changed sociological circumstances."⁵⁰ Curran maintains that since contemporary society is not structured in a hierarchical fashion (from

⁴⁶ Cf. Charles E. Curran, "Church Law," in *Directions in Fundamental Moral Theology* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, c1985), 205-208.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 208.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 209.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 210.

the top down), as it was in Aquinas's time, we do not need to have recourse to the will of the legislator to make a proper use of *epikeia*. The situation in our present time depends much more on the creative freedom and responsibility of individuals in order to safeguard the common good of society. For Curran,

The Christian must stand on his or her own two feet and make the decisions with regard to the obligations of Church laws in particular circumstances. Naturally, one will be guided by the counsel and actions of others in the Christian community. However, the ultimate decision rests with the individual. The freedom and responsibility entailed in the proper understanding of *epikeia* are the same freedom and responsibility which the free call of God in Christ presupposes. [...] The divine plan of salvation has tried to safeguard personal responsibility and freedom.⁵¹

Curran urges a proper application of *epikeia* that rests with the individual, who must determine whether the law that will best safeguard the common good is the way to follow. When we talk about individual responsibility and *epikeia* we are faced with the question of anarchy. In this sense, Curran affirms, “*Epikeia* does require that ultimate responsibility rests with individual, but such a concept does not lead to anarchy”⁵² when *epikeia* is properly exercised. Curran, according to his understanding, points out four reasons for exercising the virtue of *epikeia*:⁵³ 1) *Epikeia* is a part of justice. *Epikeia* does not mean a license to follow personal caprices or selfishness. 2) *Epikeia* aligns with the virtue of prudence,⁵⁴ since prudence is an art which does not operate with absolute certainty. Prudence is the virtue that presents itself in every risk and decision in the Christian life. 3) *Epikeia* does not try to escape from the law but demands the higher law; the law of the Spirit is the ultimate criterion for the use of *epikeia*, so the primary law for the Christian is the law of the Spirit. In this regard, Curran affirms, “Openness to the Spirit is completely

⁵¹ Curran, “Church Law,” 212-213.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 211.

⁵³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 211-212.

⁵⁴ For Curran, “Prudence is probably the most forgotten virtue in the manuals of theology. Prudence is basically an art. No one can really teach prudence to another, and yet all have an obligation to learn prudence in their daily life. In the past, moral theology has tried to do away with the virtue of prudence by an exaggerated casuistry that tried to solve in advance every conceivable type of problem.” (Curran, “Church Law,” 211).

incompatible with irresponsibility and a selfish seeking of the easiest way out in a given situation. Contemporary theology needs to develop the treatise on the rules for the discretion of spirits. The discernment of the Spirit is a most important factor in the moral life of the contemporary Christian.”⁵⁵ For Curran, the discernment becomes an important issue in moral life, where the law of the Spirit calls for careful discernment to choose rightly. 4) *Epikieia* must always be informed by *agape*, the kind of love which is willing to make personal sacrifices for the good of the Other or the community. *Agape* remains the fundamental attitude of the Christian. Curran notes,

Perhaps too often today one speaks of the law of love and the law of the Spirit without realizing the concrete demands of love in a given situation. *Agape* includes the willingness to give oneself for others. The attitude of the Christian toward the laws of the Christian community must be a meditation of love. Christian love demands the willingness to make personal sacrifices for the good of others [...] *Epikieia* in the context of *agape* can never lead to selfishness and egoistic individualism.⁵⁶

These four aspects should reduce the abuse of *epikieia* and avoid false extremes of legalism and anarchy. The exercise of the virtue of *epikieia*, as part of justice and connected to prudence, discernment, and *agape* should moderate the inapplicability of the letter of the law. If we focus on *agape* and discernment, then it may be suggested that *epikieia* is a virtue of Christian maturity and responsibility. Finally, in Curran’s perspective, *epikieia* is the practical functioning of the spirit of the law in the context of the positive law (of the Church); it is what allows for a smooth relationship between human laws and the higher law, i.e., the divine and natural laws.⁵⁷

Having explored the virtue of *epikieia* according some contemporary theologians such as Fuchs, Mahoney, and Curran it is well to return to the Good Samaritan parable, where Jesus

⁵⁵ Curran, “Church Law,” 212.

⁵⁶ Cf. *Loc. Cit.*

⁵⁷ Cf. Charles E. Curran, “Formation in Freedom and Responsibility,” in *Christian Morality Today: The Renewal of Moral Theology* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Fides Publishers, 1966), 38.

teaches us *epikeia*.⁵⁸ For Jesus, principles like charity, mercy, justice, human dignity, and the person as an end in herself are more important than some religious norms like purity codes, namely religious laws. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus shows how sometimes a religion based on law can blind believers because of their legalism. If we consider purity codes and its legalism, then this Lucan parable would be working as *epikeia* does, i.e., it is correcting and perfecting the religious law. In Luke 10:25-37, on the one hand, the priest and the Levite were blinded by their purity code, a religious law that forbids them to recognize the anonymous man who was in need as a subject. The priest and the Levite were faithful to their law. However, this law was inhuman in that context; even worst it was against the divine law that commands: “Love God and love your neighbor as yourself.” They fulfill the letter of their purity code faithfully to the legislator’s will that agrees to religious legalism, but they do not practice the double commandment of love coherently. On the other hand, the Samaritan also is faithful to the legislator’s will. However, he fulfills the God’s law that commands recognition, human dignity, and so forth, rather than the law that commands external religious purity. The Samaritan, through his actions, shows obedience to a greater law that agrees with the double commandment of love. He shows actions that not only help the half-dead man on the Jericho road to restore his human dignity, but also the Good Samaritan obeys a law, which in agreement with God’s law, humanizes and reconciles the seemingly irreconcilable and dehumanized. Through the Samaritan’s actions *epikeia* works as the virtue that makes him obedient to God’s law, free, and responsible for the Other. It may be suggested that *agape* and prudence inform his actions.

The Samaritan puts in equilibrium all the laws by focusing on the Other as a person, as subject. His actions are person-oriented. The case of the Good Samaritan allows us to apply

⁵⁸ Later, in my writings I hope to return to this statement where I would like to develop that Jesus not only teaches *epikeia*, but also He is *epikeia*.

Fuchs's five points as well as Curran's four points regarding *epikeia* (see above). I highlight the latter because of prudence, discernment, and *agape*. The priest and the Levite, are blinded by the legalism of their purity codes; therefore, there is no place neither to the grace of God in their lives nor to the virtue of *epikeia*. *Epikeia* as intellectual discernment according to God's law seems to be absent.

The Good Samaritan's parable clearly shows the inhumanity of the religious laws that guide the priest and the Levite. The Lucan Jesus through this paradigmatic story preaches about human dignity restoration, *epikeia* that correct an inhuman law that blinds and forbids recognition of the mugged man according to an "I-Thou" relationship. In this regard, Pope Benedict XVI asserts, "when fundamental essentials are at stake: human dignity, human life, the institution of the family and the equity of the social order -in other words the fundamental rights of man- no law made by men and women can subvert the norm written by the Creator in man's heart without society itself being dramatically struck ... at its very core."⁵⁹

As pointed out above, the parable of the Good Samaritan shows "hermeneutical tools" such as compassion, recognition, and human dignity, which allows us to unveil how the virtue of *epikeia* creatively and faithfully points to a greater law, i. e., God's law, the double commandment of love. The command: "love your neighbor" becomes an imperative that we must obey and *epikeia* should point this higher law because it "inscribed by the Creator in man's very nature."⁶⁰ In this sense, the interpretation of the spirit of the law becomes an important virtue; nonetheless, the Good Samaritan's actions not only override and correct a legalistic

⁵⁹ Pope Benedict XVI, in "Benedict XVI: Natural Law Is Base of Democracy," *Zenit: The World Seen from Rome*, accessed March 15, 2011, <http://www.zenit.org/article-20687?l=english>

⁶⁰ Pope Benedict XVI. Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas est*, n. 31, accessed March 13, 2011, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html

religious law, but he also balances all the law in order to fulfill the double commandment of love, which is inscribed in people's heart (see Jer 31:33).

Jesus himself through his actions balances all the laws in order to show and help human being to be more human according to the doctrine of the *image of God* (see Chapter Two: *Image of God*). The virtue of *epikeia* gets its fullness in Jesus. For Christ's follower the paradigm of *epikeia* is Jesus. He interprets the law in his every here and now; he looks for the good of the individuals and for the common good; his concern is the reign of God, therefore, the fulfillment of the double commandment of love. It may be suggested that *epikeia* is omnipresent in Jesus' life. He practices *epikeia* at every moment guided by *agape* and charity rooted in his strong relationship with his Father. The faithful relationship with the Father allows Jesus considering *Abba* as well as the reign of God his (Jesus') greatest norm. Hence, as Christ's followers, we are challenged to improve our relationship with God (charity) that moves toward the Other.⁶¹ In this regard, one might argue that *epikeia* belongs to the maturity of Christian faith development. In this sense, Demmer writes, "Whereas its [*epikeia*'s] traditional function was to address the limits of the law and the conditions for its improvement, its meaning was now expanded to identify the virtue of the adult Christian."⁶² *Epikeia* does not only mean the virtue of the correct interpretation of the spirit of the law, but also the virtue of the adult Christian that makes possible the formation of an active co-responsibility.⁶³ Demmer, as well as Mahoney and Curran, presents the virtue of *epikeia* not only as a *praxis* among individuals who must build up the common good, but also as a virtue that needs to be developed by human beings in order to achieve a major

⁶¹ Cf. Curran, "Church Law," 212.

⁶² Klaus Demmer, *Shaping the Moral Life: An Approach to Moral Theology*, James F. Keenan, ed., trans. Roberto Dell'Oro (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2000), 11.

⁶³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 82.

co-responsibility, which should go beyond any limitation as the parable of Good Samaritan teaches us (see Chapter One: Conclusions).

According to Demmer, “*epikeia* represents a work of progressive amelioration of norms that seeks to articulate, in an increasingly perfect way, their true content.”⁶⁴ *Epikeia*, therefore, seeks to figure out what different laws really ask. Therefore, *epikeia* as virtue is not only trying to figure out the spirit of the law, but also is trying to balance the different laws since it is the interpretation of law.

Demmer’s understanding, according to Keenan, is that moral norm is “never immediately apparent from its linguistic formulation.”⁶⁵ It may be noted that moral norms have their own context and need to be interpreted by the moral reasoning in their proper here and now. However, there are circumstances that face us with “unforeseen situations in which moral reasoning is handicapped by the normative tradition in which it is immersed.”⁶⁶ In this kind of situation, Keenan affirms, “the virtue of *epieikeia* reflects ‘the critical and creative impulse of moral reasoning’ to think beyond traditional boundaries and to introduce new points of view and new standards by which to weigh morally relevant goods.”⁶⁷ Thus, the virtue of *epikeia* correctly applied works creatively as a generative virtue within the frame of the hermeneutical context. The application of *epikeia* requires us to consider our here and now, i.e., to recognize our context and our history. Demmer and Curran are close in their thinking, if we consider that *epikeia* safeguards the proper autonomy of moral reasoning and helps to shape the freedom, creativity and responsibility of human beings.

E. GOOD SAMARITAN’S ACTION AS *EPIKEIA*

⁶⁴ Demmer, *Shaping the Moral Life*, 49.

⁶⁵ James F. Keenan and Thomas R. Kopfensteiner, “Moral Theology out of Western Europe,” *Theological Studies* 59 (1998): 128, accessed January 14, 2011, <http://www.ts.mu.edu/content/59/59.1/59.1.6.pdf>.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 129.

⁶⁷ *Loc. Cit.*

The parable of the Good Samaritan reveals the virtues of compassion, mercy, hospitality, solidarity, health care, prudence, courage, and so forth. Among these virtues, compassion is one the most evident while *epikeia* is explicitly absent in this Lucan parable. However, because of the “hermeneutical tools,” I think the virtue of *epikeia* emerges from the Good Samaritan’s actions. The Samaritan interprets the law in his here and now; he make possible the “true actualization” of the law, and he fulfills God’s law by becoming himself neighbor of the half-dead man on the Jericho road. Let us note here that the notion *epikeia* does not occur in the New Testament in relation to Jesus. However, his actions shines through this virtue. Thus, in the person and example of Jesus is clearly found the application of the virtue of *epikeia*, which is seen, especially, in the permanent attitude of Jesus before the Pharisees, who wants to judge according to the letter of the Mosaic Law in a legalistic way. Jesus gives primacy to greater principles like mercy and *agape* (see Lk 6:36). Thus, one of the most evident examples is the overcoming of the letter of the law with regard to the Sabbath rest (see Mt 12: 1-8; Mk 2:23-28 and Lk 6: 1-5). On the holiest day in Israel (see Ex 20:8), Jesus performs healings, plucks heads of grain, and proclaims that “The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath; so the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath” (Mk 2:27-28). He affirms, “something greater than the temple is here” (Mt 12:6) Jesus allows the letter of the law to be corrected or dispensed when it becomes inhuman. When it is against the human dignity, the human realization, the human condition, and therefore, it is against God’s law. Let us recall Fuchs’s cases where he suggests reformulation of the law (see above).

The virtue of *epikeia* shines through the Good Samaritan’s actions not in perspective of Suarez, but in the perspectives of Aristotle, Aquinas, and modern moral theologians whom we brought into the discussion. Thus, the Good Samaritan’s *epikeia* shows us prudence, humility,

compassion, mercy, recognition, restoration of human dignity, liberation, and so forth. The Samaritan's merciful actions challenge the lawyer to become himself neighbor of the one who is in need. The Good Samaritan focuses on the half-dead man; the double love command informs his reason and consequently the *praxis* of the virtue of *epikeia* in a particular situation. In this sense, It may be noted that the Lucan Jesus, through Luke 10: 25-37, tells us a story where we find a man who interprets the spirit of the law and balances all the laws in order to fulfill the greatest commandment: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself" (Lk 10:27). God's law points to human dignity, human freedom, and human co-responsibility, in order to achieve the human being fullness, it binds us in a way that other laws are not.

Luke 10:25-37 shows Jesus' morality informed by the double commandment of love, which is focused on God and humankind. Consequently, morality should be rooted in both an "I-Thou" relationship with the Father (to love God) and an "I-Thou" relationship with our fellow man and woman (to love your neighbor). Thus, Jesus' teaching is rooted in his deep relationship with his Father and the Other, and it is oriented to the reign of God. Jesus teaches us "an ethic of relationship with God, others, and the world in the light of that relationship."⁶⁸ This relationship unveils a relational theology (God) and a relational anthropology (the Other and the world). The connection between them will allow us to bridge the Scriptures and moral theology.

Regarding the term "love," let us recall Curran's *epikeia* when referring to *agape*. For Curran, the virtue of *epikeia* must always be informed by *agape*, the kind of love which is willing to make personal sacrifices for the good of Others or the community (see above). Curran also focuses on the importance of prudence and discernment when he refers to the application of

⁶⁸ Daniel Harrington and James F. Keenan. *Jesus and Virtue Ethics: Building Bridges between New Testament Studies and Moral Theology* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 8.

epikeia. In this regard, we need some kind of spirituality to make possible the application of *epikeia* in our context according to God's law. We need to open our eyes to the suffering of the Other and allow him/her to move us on to practice what Jesus teaches us. The virtue of *epikeia* shines through Jesus, who teaches us how to become fully human person by acting against the legalism that might blind us before the Other in need.

II. JOHANN BAPTIST METZ'S CATEGORY OF SPIRITUALITY

Johann Baptist Metz is a Catholic theologian who was a student of the theologian Karl Rahner. As a student of Rahner, he broke with Rahner's transcendental theology in a turn to a theology rooted in *praxis*. Consequently, whereas Rahner's theological project was characterized by the problem of being, Metz's theological project would be defined by the problem of the suffering.⁶⁹ Metz has developed a "practical fundamental theology" based on the categories of memory, narrative, and solidarity in response to the suffering. These categories of Metz emerge from his own experience (experience of the Holocaust), encounter with the suffering in the Scriptures, and dialogue with authors of Frankfurt School like Walter Benjamin, Ernest Bloch, among others.⁷⁰ This section will try to integrate these categories of Metz with his spirituality and the virtue of *epikeia* within the frame of the parable of the Good Samaritan.

The categories of Metz are important for his "practical fundamental theology" because of its social and political implications. From these categories (memory, narrative, and solidarity) I would like to refer to memory, which is use under the title *dangerous memory*.⁷¹ Concerning the Christ-event, Metz argues that the memory of Christ's suffering is unique in that it is not the

⁶⁹ Cf. James Matthew Ashley, *Interruptions: Mysticism, Politics, and Theology in the work of Johann Baptist Metz* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, c1998), vii.

⁷⁰ Cf. Julia D. E. Prinz, *Endangering Hunger for God: Johann Baptist Metz and Dorothee Sölle at the Interface of Biblical Hermeneutic and Christian Spirituality* (Münster: Lit; Piscataway, N : Distributed in North American by Transaction Publishers, c 2007), 51-90.

⁷¹ Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society. Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, trans., and ed., J. Matthew Ashely, ed. (New York: Crossroad Pub. Co., c2007), 169.

memory of a past event, over and done with, but the memory of events which is future oriented and, consequently, hope inspiring.⁷² To remember Christ's history of suffering, is to remember the future of human freedom beyond suffering.⁷³ Therefore, the category of memory has a future content and, as such, does not create "a false consciousness' of the past, an opium for the present,"⁷⁴ as other forms of memory do. It is not a bourgeois memory, which is considered as a "superstition and left to the whim and fancy of the individual."⁷⁵ Rather it is a memory which "does not obey the calculus of technical-pragmatic reason,"⁷⁶ establishing what Metz calls "a kind of anti-history based on the memory of suffering. This would be a way of understanding history in which we would also always be thinking about the alternatives that have been defeated and destroyed, a history *ex memoria passionis* as a history of the vanquished."⁷⁷ The memories human of suffering are particularly dangerous in that these memories are not simply a matter of looking backward as archeologist does but are rather future oriented forward memories in which we might remember the promises made by God and the "hopes out of which people lived because of those promises, and bind herself or himself to these memories in the life-determining way."⁷⁸ The memories of human suffering are memories that challenge us to remember that "the past in terms of a future that is still outstanding. This kind of remembering"⁷⁹ breaks through the spell of the ruling consciousness"⁸⁰ of the present in light of unfulfilled hopes. Memory is intimately linked to the prophetic call for freedom, justice and, human dignity. Therefore, the

⁷² Cf. Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 182-185.

⁷³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 107.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁷⁶ *Loc. Cit.*

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁷⁹ "Remembering" is central as a "category of interruption" that resists the flow of time; it is the organon of an apocalyptic consciousness. "Remembering" works as a category for saving identity. (Cf. Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 170).

⁸⁰ Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 182.

memories of human suffering challenge the present in light of the future promised by God. In an eschatological way, we can refer to “already, but not yet” that demands and challenges us to act in the present according to a “dogmatic faith.”⁸¹ In this regard, the Gospel is nothing other than the *dangerous memory* of Christ’s cross and resurrection that has interrupted the history. Jesus reveals the violence and injustice in our world and he inspires solidarity with the victims through the memory of their suffering toward a future of hope.

Therefore, the parable of the Good Samaritan is not far from become *dangerous memory* because of the suffering of the anonymous man who may be any human being. This unnamed man represents the human indignity and human suffering. Thus, the Lucan Jesus tells us a narrative which is the source of creative critique and resistance to social, cultural, political, economic, and religious circumstances that might oppress us. This story is against life-destroying situation and it shows the way to restore human dignity through merciful actions. It may be said Jesus’ sensitivity for the suffering of the Other means the new lifestyle that Jesus teaches and reminds us.

The parable of the Good Samaritan ends with Jesus’ imperative words to dismiss the lawyer: “Go and do likewise” (Lk 10:37b). These commands of Jesus are not only addressed to the lawyer, but also to Christ’s followers. If we consider that this parable is not a Christological one, but theological and anthropological; then we can say that Jesus’ imperatives command any human being to “go and do likewise.” Jesus orders his audience to become themselves neighbors and practice what God commands. In this sense, our Lucan parable becomes a *dangerous memory*⁸² to humankind, but especially to believers. The parable draws an anonymous and half-

⁸¹ “Dogmatic faith: dogmas as formulas of dangerous memory.” (Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 169).

⁸² For Metz, *dangerous memory* is the basic way to understand and express Christianity; it is based upon the memory of Christ-event (Cf. James Matthew Ashley, *Interruptions: Mysticism, Politics, and Theology in the work of Johann Baptist Metz* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, c1998), 193). Dangerous memory is “the

dead man who interrupts the Samaritan's journey, and dialectically he interrupts the suffering of this unnamed man (see Chapter One: The Narrative Voice, see also Chapter Two: Paradox and "Saving Categories"). The parable becomes a dangerous story in search of freedom, human dignity, and salvation.⁸³ From this perspective I introduce Metz's understanding of spirituality which is at the center of Metz's *praxis*.

A. *MYSTICISM OF OPEN EYES*

Metz's notion of *mysticism of open or opened eyes*⁸⁴ is a kind of spirituality that compromises with social transformation. I think that the parable of the Good Samaritan is connected with this sort of spirituality because it transforms the reality of the nameless man; the Samaritan gives him back his humanity and his dignity. Luke 10:25-37 reveals for us the recognition of the Other as a subject⁸⁵ based on an "I-Thou" relationship, which demands not only personal, but also social and political relations.

Metz's spirituality is linked to his category of solidarity, which "is a category of assistance, of supporting and encouraging the subject in the face of that which threatens him or her most acutely and in the face of his or her suffering."⁸⁶ Solidarity works as universal solidarity because it has compromised not only with suffering people, but also with the dead.⁸⁷ Even more, solidarity has future, past, and present dimensions. It is a "solidarity looking forward" with

form of eschatological hope that is worked out in terms of its historical and meditation" (Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 169). It is a subversive memory, a *dangerous memory* that questions dehumanizing social structures and calls Christians and others to conversion. (Cf. John K. Downey, ed., *Love's Strategy: The Political Theology of Johann Baptist Metz* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, c1999), 78, 145). Metz argues that *dangerous memory* is the theological category that enables all people to claim their identity and become real subjects in the presence of God. Moreover, Metz thinks that *dangerous memory* is memory that safeguards human being, as a subject, against the historical and social destruction of one's subjectivity through radical evil and suffering. In this way, *dangerous memory* is might be considered as a category of human liberation (Cf. Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 169-185).

⁸³ Cf. Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 191.

⁸⁴ Johann Baptist Metz, *A Passion for God. The Mystical-Political Dimension of Christianity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 163.

⁸⁵ Cf. Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 200.

⁸⁶ Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 208.

⁸⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 84.

future generations, a present solidarity with those suffering today; it is a “solidarity looking backward” with those who have suffered, and silenced by death and forgotten. Concerning “solidarity looking forward,” it is solidarity of *praxis*, working for the alleviation of suffering. Regarding “solidarity looking backward,” it is a “practical solidarity of memory,” which looks the history from the perspective of the vanquished and the victims.⁸⁸ Metz’s spirituality is also linked to faith, which according to Metz is “a praxis in history and society that understands itself as a solidaristic hope in the God of Jesus as the God of the living and dead who calls all to be subjects in God presence.”⁸⁹ Therefore, faith, which has an individual accountability as well as social and political responsibilities, is not only a relationship with oneself, but also a relationship with God and Others’ suffering. Returning to “practical solidarity memory,” we might say that it forgets neither the dead nor those who have been overcome or conquered. In this sense, memory and narrative are important to build the notion of subject as a subject in the history. It means, we are challenged to be affected by the history of the Other; the suffering of the Other becomes in a dangerous narrative to us.

The category of narrative as a remembering memory “operates on a ‘small-scale’ and unpretentiously.”⁹⁰ For Metz the narrative of Salvation History and Christ event continue telling us the stories of the suffering and hopes of the vanquished of history. Narrative reminds us that history is always history of suffering that shows “the agonizingly painful experience of nonidentity brought on by violence and oppression is a part of historical life, as well as the experience of nonidentity that happens in guilt, in being fated to finitude and death.”⁹¹ The

⁸⁸ Cf. Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 124.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

⁹⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 193.

⁹¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 192.

Here we would like to point out as example of narrative the case of the True and Reconciliation Commission of Peru where narrative worked as *dangerous narrative*. Those Peruvian people who had been victims of the violence (1980-2000) restored their hope in the future and faith when they had the opportunity to relate their own memories through

narrative of suffering demands from us solidaristic *praxis* that opens us to hope. Christian faith as hope in the future is not justified through abstractions or theoretical arguments, but through “the *praxis* of discipleship”⁹² transmitted to Others in the form of narratives and hope of God’s immanent actions. The category of memory is part of a dynamic activity that facilitates the defining and re-defining our human identity. Therefore, when we narrate our experiences, we become somehow subjects. Narrative helps us to form our identity. Christian identity thus cannot, according to Metz, be “conveyed in a purely speculative way, but narratively.”⁹³ Narrative tells us the history of suffering that together with memory launches us toward solidarity and an unconditional obligation to transform the suffering of the Other through solidaristic *praxis*. This unconditional obligation is *mysticism of open eyes*.

As memory and narrative, solidarity takes place within a particular context as a response to those who suffer. The category of solidarity, according to Metz, must engage with questions like “solidarity with whom? and solidarity in what form?”⁹⁴ Solidarity is the category that helps human being to become subjects before God.⁹⁵ For Metz, becoming a subject before God is both the process and the *telos* of human-human and human-divine relationships.⁹⁶ It is in “solidarity that narrating and remembering salvation wins its specific mystical-political praxis.”⁹⁷ The categories of memory and narrative cannot become practical categories of theology without solidarity. The three categories work together to make possible Metz’s “practical fundamental theology.” He affirms, “only in concert can memory, narrative, and solidarity be categories of a

narrative. All those people who were able tell stories in community became subjects and they were able re-define their identity.

⁹² Cf. Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 154.

⁹³ Cf. *Loc. Cit.*

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁹⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, 70, 78.

⁹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 70.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 209.

practical fundamental theology.”⁹⁸ The category of solidarity emerges as a category of the salvation of the subject when s/he is threatened by being forgotten, by oppression, by death, and other inhuman situations.⁹⁹ We encounter God when we open our eyes to the suffering of Others and bring them before God as subjects thus our humanity is deeply implicated in our response to suffering. Indeed, I think that the process of becoming a free and fully human, subject before God, takes place in and through our response to the sufferings of Others in our context.

The *mysticism of open eyes* faces us with the sufferings of Others who demand from us a recognition as a subject, but never as an object, i.e., “instrumental relationship.” This sort of spirituality claims a solidarity which requires a constant openness to personal conversion and transformation, and then a disposition of our will to identify with experience the sufferings of Others, it means compassion in our always here and now, in our context. Let us note here that, like solidarity, authentic conversion and transformation are processes that are both personal and social. According to Marmion, Metz would agree that “spirituality must always be personal, but never private; it must always be the spirituality of a particular person, while at the same time involved in a variety of social relationships and responsibilities.”¹⁰⁰ The *mysticism of open eyes* challenges us to embrace the suffering of Others with compassion. In this compassionate solidarity, i.e. merciful actions, it finds the presence of the liberating God. This is the God who interrupts history through human merciful actions on the behalf of the poor, the victims, the marginalized, the vanquished, and the unnamed.

Recognition of the Other as a subject demands an experience of poverty (*poverty of spirit*). In *poverty of spirit*, we accept ourselves as beings that do not belong to ourselves, but

⁹⁸ Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 209.

⁹⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 211.

¹⁰⁰ Declan Marmion, *A Spirituality of Everyday Faith: A Theological Investigation of the Notion of Spirituality in Karl Rahner* (Belgium: Peeters Press Louvain, 1998), 297.

God.¹⁰¹ In order to abandon oneself to God, one must abandon oneself to poverty¹⁰² in the way that Jesus did in his incarnation. His incarnation demonstrates the proper spirit, which forgets itself and looks to the Other.¹⁰³ This radical self-acceptance does not involve a turning away from the world; on the contrary, it involves a turning towards the world, the suffering of the Other. Therefore, our relationship with God is decided in our encounter with the Other (see Mt 25:31-46 and Lk 10:25-37).

Poverty of spirit is *praxis* spirituality; its orientation towards the Other is the fact that love of God is not something apart from love of neighbor. Indeed they are two sides of the same coin.¹⁰⁴ Love of God and love of neighbor are therefore dialectically related and inseparable (see Chapter One: The Narrative Voice, see also Chapter Two: Paradox and “Saving Categories”). It may be noted that they while inclusive one of another however are distinct; they are related to one another in the manner of a “unity in difference.” Consequently, to attempt a lived spirituality without a genuine concern for and compassion for one’s suffering neighbor becomes in a false discipleship.

Poverty of spirit challenges us to open ourselves to both God’s and human’s mysteries, both in an “I-Thou” relationship. In this sense, Metz points out, “Our human neighbor now becomes a ‘sacrament’ of God’s hidden presence among us, a mediator between God and humanity.”¹⁰⁵ Therefore, when we recognize the Other as oneself and avoid using him/her as an instrument of self-assertion, then our human encounter will take place within the horizon of unending mystery, and we might experience an authentic and transformative “I-Thou” relationship. Consequently, salvation will be a reality in our concrete situations, in our

¹⁰¹ Cf. Johann Baptist Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, trans., John Drury (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 31.

¹⁰² Cf. *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁰³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁰⁵ Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, 32.

metaphorical Jericho road (see Chapter One: The Narrative Voice, see also Chapter Two: Paradox and “Saving Categories”). This openness to the Other can be made possible only in the poverty of self-abandonment.¹⁰⁶ Concerning Luke 10:25-37, by abandoning himself and focusing on the mugged man, the Good Samaritan abandons himself to God. He fulfills God’s law and will; the application of *epikeia* in the Samaritan’s experience is informed by the suffering of the voiceless man through *splanchnizomai*.¹⁰⁷ If we consider that “poverty of spirit is hidden component of every transcending act,”¹⁰⁸ then the Lucan Jesus, through the Good Samaritan’s actions, shows us the possibility of God’s transcendence in human life, in its concrete historicity and temporality. The experience of *poverty of spirit* would make us more human toward the fullness of our humanity. It will guide entirely our life and how we interpret the law (*epikeia*). Thus, when *epikeia* is informed by suffering of the Other, *agape* and discernment should point to higher law, namely, “love God” which earthly side is “love your neighbor.”

B. SPIRITUALITY AS A *PRAXIS*

Metz’s spirituality as obedience to God is a *praxis* since the reality of suffering is before us. If we allowed both reality and suffering to confront us, then we would be transformed by them and one would be able to interpret the law within this reality which is here and now. Hence, the greatest challenge is to be faithful to God’s law. *Poverty of spirit* is not a passive spirituality; rather it is an active one engaged with reality. In Luke 10:25-37 we find a lawyer who asks Jesus about eternal life (v. 25) and about “his neighbor” (v. 29). In Luke 10:36 Jesus asks the lawyer, “Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” The lawyer answers, “The one who showed him mercy” (v. 37). Let us note here that

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁰⁷ Let us recall that *splanchnizomai* means to feel deeply or viscerally, to yearn, have compassion, pity; it is a verb that mainly expresses Jesus’ and the Father’s profound compassion toward humankind.

¹⁰⁸ Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, 45.

Jesus' story opens the lawyer's eyes and challenges him to become himself neighbor, since the relationship with God requires an "I-Thou" relationship with the Other, i. e., our neighbor. In this way Metz asserts, "Our relationship with God is decided in our encounter with other human beings. One of the non-canonical sayings of Jesus is 'The ones who see their neighbor see God.'"¹⁰⁹ In Luke 10:25-37, the lawyer could have understood that in abandoning himself to offer aid to the anonymous man, by focusing on his suffering, he would have fulfilled what he prays in the *shema* and then he would be worthy to inherit the eternal life. If so, then the lawyer was interrupted and consequently transformed by this dangerous narrative.

Metz, through his notion of spirituality, presents us with a passion for God which is a passion for Others. He points out,

In the end Jesus did not teach an ascending mysticism of closed eyes, but rather a God-mysticism with an increased readiness for perceiving, a mysticism of open eyes, which sees more and not less. It is a mysticism that especially makes visible all invisible and inconvenient suffering, and - convenient or not - pays attention to it and takes responsibility for it, for the sake of a God who is a friend to human beings.¹¹⁰

Metz presents a spirituality that bridges contemplation and action in our suffering world. Even more, he bridges spirituality and ethics according to the greatest commandment of God.

Mysticism of open eyes has particular sensitivity to the suffering and demands from us self-abandoned and to act against both a possible *bourgeois* religion and a blind obedience to religious legalism that forgets the earthly side of the double love command, i.e, "loves your neighbor." Metz's spirituality requires from us solidaristic *praxis*; it demands from us to fight against injustice, suffering, and inhumanity. This spirituality becomes a "dangerous spirituality" since it demands from us to do something in favor of the Other who in the sight of God is equal to us. According to the doctrine of the *image of God* everyone has the same dignity and status

¹⁰⁹ Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, 32.

¹¹⁰ Metz, *A Passion for God*, 163.

before God, we are called to become subject before God (See Chapter Two: *Image of God*).

Mysticism of open eyes is a mysticism where the spiritual and the political are involved and are connected with *dangerous memory*, narrative, and solidarity. Metz's spirituality attempts to resist the tendency toward religious privatization by focusing on the *dangerous memory* of *memoria passionis* and *memoria resurrectionis* of Jesus as well as on the suffering of the Other. Thus, in regard to this spirituality Burke notes,

Mysticism of open eyes is a mysticism that *makes visible all invisible and inconvenient suffering*, a mysticism that *pays attention and takes responsibility*, engaging this broken world in order to find there its God. It is a mysticism of dangerous memory - Auschwitz for Metz, Hiroshima for Arrupe, the *memoria passionis, mortis et resurrectionis Jesu Christi* for all Christians - in which the mystical and the political are radically engaged and correlated.¹¹¹

This spirituality, which places the *dangerous memory* of the suffering world at its center, has personal, social, and political consequences since it invites us to practice our freedom and co-responsibility according to God's law in our concrete reality.

Metz's spirituality and the parable of Good Samaritan require from us solidaristic *praxis* in agreement to the double commandment of love, which according to the spirit of the law commands recognition of the Other as a subject, and consequently to act in favor of human freedom, human dignity, and human realization. They are not limited by social, political, religious, or racial conditions; they point the reign of God and the fulfillment of the double commandment of love in our context. Thus, spirituality, Scriptures, and *epikeia* shape our Christian character by challenging us to enlarge our personal, social, political, and religious horizons according God's law. He "calls *all* men and women to be subjects in God's

¹¹¹ Kevin F. Burke, S.J. "Pedro Arrupe's Mysticism of Open Eyes," 12. Berkeley: Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, accessed May 18, 2011, http://www.scu.edu/jst/whatwedo/events/archive/upload/burke_25sept07pix.pdf

presence.”¹¹² He send His son to “bring good news to the poor, and proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free” (Lk 4:18; Is 61:1).

C. THEOLOGY OF THE SUFFERING

A theology of suffering takes place when memory of human suffering interrupts through its narrative. In this sense, *dangerous memory* challenges and draws us into *splanchnizomai*, compassion, and *praxis* to restore humanity and dignity of the victims of injustices in our context.

The parable of the Good Samaritan becomes a *dangerous memory* because it reminds us, paradigmatically, of the suffering of an anonymous. The narrative not only connects our understanding with that hypothetical situation, but also it represents the claim of every human being who suffers and needs our help. The parable becomes a paradigm that represents the claim of our suffering world. We can respond to this claim like both the priest and the Levite did, by simple avoiding the anonymous man on the Jericho road. Also, we can respond like the Samaritan by opening our eyes to the suffering and being interrupted. The suffering and its reality might make us subject-agents of transformation when we open our eyes to social injustices.

If our spirituality is coherent to *poverty of spirit*, if it is a *mysticism of open eyes*, then we might bring ourselves the opportunity to “love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves” (Lk 10:27) in our context, in our here and now. Thus, it will be the other person (our neighbor) who brings us conversion and salvation, and then we might bring her salvation by restoring her humanity, dignity, condition as subject, and her status as child of God. As discussed in previous chapter, salvation operates in a dialectical way, this action builds up human identity when we

¹¹² Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 214.

update our daily lives the Samaritan's actions as *dangerous memory*, dangerous narrative that moves us into a concrete *praxis*. In this regard, Metz affirms, "the formation of identity always begins with the awakening of memory."¹¹³ The Good Samaritan parable becomes, certainly, a paradigm that challenges us because it works as *dangerous memory* does. *Dangerous memory* and its narrative not only challenge us, but also demand even to risk our life to save the human being who suffers on the metaphorical Jericho road as the Good Samaritan did. Therefore, *mysticism of open eyes*, *poverty of spirit*, and the virtue of *epikeia* demand from believers a faithful obedience to the spirit of God's law when we are faced by the suffering of the Other and human indignity.

1. Subject and *Praxis*

The priest and the Levite saw the half-dead man as neither a human being like themselves nor a subject; they were blinded by their purity code; they did not interpret the law according God's law, but according to the letter of religious law. The Samaritan recognizes the mugged man as a subject who needed him. The man who had been rejected became a subject in God's presence through the Samaritan's *praxis* and solidarity. Both of them became subjects. Therefore, the Samaritan was de-centered¹¹⁴ by the suffering of the voiceless and unnamed man. The Samaritan's actions remind us that one of the Jesus' teaching is about his rejection against suffering, which is a foundational theme in Metz's theology as well. In this sense, Metz affirms,

The memory of suffering, in its Christian sense, does not evade the issue in the gray areas of what is left to social and political discretion; rather it sharpens a social and political conscience in the interest of the suffering of others. It prevents the privatization and internalization of suffering and the flattening of its social dimension. [...] this *memoria passionis* should become operative in transforming political life and its structures, since the change turns out to be the decisive challenge involved in the question of the future.¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 75.

¹¹⁴ Cf. Sobrino, *El Principio Misericordia. Bajar de la Cruz a los Pueblos Crucificados* (Santander: Sal Terrae, 1992), 39-40

¹¹⁵ Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 111.

Thus, *memoria passionis* confronts, challenges, and demands from us a transformation of our reality according to Jesus' proclamation. He proclaimed the reign of God: God's cause, which aligns with human dignity and liberation.

Metz's theology through memories (*dangerous memory*) links *praxis* with suffering. This kind of memory interrupts the apathetic world through solidarity for and with the helpless and suffering, in our concrete reality.¹¹⁶ Thus, through our *praxis* the subject does not disappear; rather it becomes the center and *telos* of our actions.

2. "To whom am I Neighbor?"

In chapter one it has been pointed out that Jesus inverts the original question asked by the lawyer in verse 29b (see Chapter One: The Plot: Revelation Plot). Thus, having told the story of the Samaritan, Jesus' reply ("Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor...?" (v. 36)) changes the direction and meaning of the lawyer's original question. While the original question about the neighbor was focused on oneself ("Who is my neighbor?" (v. 29b)), now it is focused on the Other ("To whom am I a neighbor?"). The inversion of these questions about the term "neighbor" shows us the transformation that is taking place in the lawyer's coming to understand neighbor as one who practices divine mercy (as the Samaritan did). Furthermore, the lawyer is able to see and recognize who his neighbor is by becoming himself a neighbor.

The Lucan Jesus inverts the lawyer's question "Who is my neighbor?" into "Who is the neighbor?" The neighbor is the one who shows mercy; the neighbor is you, you are to be neighbor. The neighbor is the one who reads this parable and locates the *dangerous memory* of Jesus. By becoming neighbor each of us has the opportunity to see, recognize, and help any needy human being who finds us on the way of our lives and gives us the possibility of eternal

¹¹⁶ Cf. Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, 67-68.

life (see Lk 10:25-37; Mt 25: 31-46). Therefore, Christ's followers are called to open their eyes to their needy neighbor; we must respond to him/her even with our prayer. In this sense, prayer becomes also in a *dangerous memory* that interrupts and informs our reason and virtue of *epikeia* toward God's cause and law.

Regarding the double commandment of love, Pope Benedict XVI observes, "Love of God and love of neighbor are thus inseparable, they form a single commandment."¹¹⁷ From this statement it may be noted that "love of God and love of neighbor" are "simultaneous actions," and they are connected in a dialectical way: one engages the other, one needs the other. As pointed out above, they are related to one another in the manner of a "unity in difference." This "unity in difference" is what Metz points out with his notion of *mysticism of open eyes*. In this way, love of God would not distract us from the ethical task. On the contrary, it requires from us a co-responsibility in our concrete history and time, in our always here and now. Loving God is possible not on abstract but in the concrete reality and it makes possible through the virtue of *epikeia* that points to interpret the spirit of God's law. Let us note here the importance of knowing where the law comes from. We need a deep relationship with God, the Lawmaker, to interpret the law according to the spirit of His law, rather than the letter of the human law. Prayer, therefore, becomes an important issue as a *dangerous memory* that interrupts and shows us the way to practice the virtues of *epikeia* and solidarity in our lives.

CONCLUSIONS

In Luke 10:25-37, the actions of the Samaritan show us the practice of love without limits. One of Luke's messages is that eternal life and salvation are for all people who uphold the actions of the Good Samaritan as a paradigmatic story in his/her own life.

¹¹⁷ Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas est*, n. 16, 31, accessed March 13, 2011, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html

The analysis in this chapter pointed to some similarities between Metz's spirituality and the parable of the Good Samaritan. Both are focused on the Other, on the suffering, and on an "I-Thou" relationship in a personal, social, and political levels. They are oriented toward social and political compromise through solidarity. Metz's spirituality and the Good Samaritan are decentered by the human suffering. For both, compassion brings them the possibility to help any human being who is crying out to God. Solidarity makes possible a transformation of the reality of the suffering; solidarity is the possibility to restore the broken of the poor, the oppressed, the suffering through concrete actions in our context. Solidarity is not only a restoration: it is also an eschatological experience. In this sense, Metz and the Lucan Jesus are presenting an eschatology in which hope is not only in the future, but also in the present time "already"; hope has social and political consequences because salvation is here and now in the commitment to the one in need by becoming ourselves his/her neighbor. Thus, solidarity is essential in order to be an authentic person, an authentic subject. Nonetheless, solidarity must agree with God's law, so the virtue of *epikeia* becomes an important virtue that Christians need to develop and practice in their daily lives.

This kind of solidarity in Metz's theology is rooted in his spirituality, which is a *mysticism of open eyes*. In this mysticism, the spiritual and the political are engaged and connected with *dangerous memory*, solidarity, and narrative. Metz's spirituality permits us to understand the concepts of compassion and conversion in relation with the Other in a social and political context.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, both the priest's and the Levite's obedience to God's law were tested on the Jericho road. They failed not because of themselves, but because of their legalism to their purity codes, which blinded and forbade them to be interrupted by the

unnamed and voiceless man. Also, the Samaritan's obedience to God's law was tested, but Jesus praised him because he interpreted the law according to the spirit of the law that points human dignity. The Samaritan became the one who fulfilled God's law and practiced *epikeia* in a here and now situation. He opened his eyes to his context; he embodies the *mysticism of open eyes*. Like these characters, our obedience to God and how we interpret His law are tested every day when one sees the suffering world (human being, environment, and nature). However, we might ask ourselves "What are our "purity codes" that blinds us and do not allow us to be interrupted?"

As the half-dead man interrupts the Good Samaritan's journey, the Lucan parable seeks to interrupt and to transform us. The parable demands coherence between God's commandment and its practice in our here and now situations; it demands *ortodoxia* and *ortopraxis*. The commandment "Love God and love your neighbor" become in a single one. They are "unity in difference." The parable challenges us not only to practice mercy and to bring us the possibility to be saved, but also to be humble by knowing our place in the world before the one who is in need. The Good Samaritan's actions confront the religious laws (purity codes) that are applied against human dignity and God's law. In this sense, the parable presents with "hermeneutical tools" such as compassion, mercy, recognition, and human dignity that allow us to unveil within the parable not only the fulfillment of the double commandment of love, but also how the virtue of *epikeia* works. The virtue of *epikeia* worked in all the characters of the parable. Nonetheless in the case of the priest and the Levite this virtue was informed by their purity codes that point to sanctification. In the case of the Samaritan, *epikeia* was informed by *splachnizomai*. Therefore, the Good Samaritan's actions according to the virtue of *epikeia* correct an "inhuman law" based on the legalism of purity codes. The virtue of *epikeia* reminds us that the human being is a subject-agent who is called to become a full person. In this sense, it may be suggested that the

virtue of *epikeia* belongs to the maturity of Christian faith development, and it helps to shape the freedom, creativity, and responsibility of human beings not only as individuals, but also as members of a society which demands co-responsibility. We must base *epikeia* on the teachings of Jesus, who was not trying to replace one law with another, but to get people to respond to God's law in a way that go beyond merely obeying the law.

Jesus is the one who used and applied *epikeia* fully and was able to interpret, balance all the laws according to God's law. The Lucan Jesus teaches us to obey the lawgiver's will when the law is according to the spirit of the legislator, namely God. However, it is a priority to learn how to interpret God's law and His will in our context. In this regard, *poverty of spirit* and recognition of the Other as subject, as well as the ability of discerning God's law will be important to develop the virtue of *epikeia* in each of us. The virtue of *epikeia* as the interpretation of the spirit of law launches us to merciful actions, into a solidaristic *praxis*. In this regard one might say that virtue of *epikeia* is not only informed by *spilachnizomai* and mercy, but also by *dangerous memory* and narrative. All this experiences move us on merciful actions in order to restore human dignity. Hence, as the Lucan Jesus teaches us we must interpret the law creatively in every here and now, i.e., we must contextualize God's law always. As human beings and believers we are called to develop the virtue of *epikeia* and practice it according Jesus' teaching, which is in agreement with God's will and commandments. We are not only called to "be holy, for I [the Lord] am holy" (Lev 11:44, see also 19:2), but also to "be merciful, just as [our] Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36).

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

- This thesis which attempted to bridge Scripture and ethics through the virtue of *epikeia* and also tried to link spirituality and ethics; the research focused on the parable of the Good Samaritan, the virtue of *epikeia*, and the notions of *poverty of spirit* and *mysticism of open eyes*. In the process of developing this thesis, I have achieved a better understanding of : 1) the parable and of terms such as *splanchnizomai* (pity, compassion) and *plesion* (neighbor); 2) the paradox and its importance for an anthropological reflection; 3) what *epikeia* means and how it works in the parable; and, 4) the Metz's spirituality as *poverty of spirit* and *mysticism of open eyes*.
- The analysis of Luke 10:25-37 revealed the importance of the noun "neighbor." The Lucan Jesus, through the parable of the Good Samaritan, defines this noun in a definitive and new way. The term "neighbor" is used twice by both the lawyer (v. 29b) and Jesus (v. 36). For each of them the comprehension of neighbor is different. In verse 29b the question focuses on the object of love, the one who needs to be loved, while verse 36 focuses on the subject of love, the one who loves. Hence, Jesus inverts the original question asked by the lawyer in verse 29b and therefore the interest is no longer on who my neighbor is but rather it is on "To whom I am a neighbor?" For the Lucan Jesus you are the neighbor, you are to be neighbor. The actual neighbor is the one who reads this parable and locates the *dangerous memory* of Jesus.
- The parable shows us two different reactions, consequently two different hermeneutics. For the priest and the Levite, the hermeneutics is the purity code, and as a result they place "love one's neighbor" within their purity code. For the Samaritan, as well as for Jesus, the key hermeneutic is the double commandment of love, which in agreement to the reign of God

aligns with human dignity, liberation, and realization. Thus, the Lucan Jesus places “love one’s neighbor” above the purity code. He gives us a broader understanding of the notion of neighbor; it becomes a divine category, thus one does not have a specific and categorized neighbor but rather everyone has the possibility to make himself a neighbor by practicing merciful actions and letting God be God through his human actions. The Lucan Jesus bridges the commandment “love one’s neighbor” and “love God” so that they become a single commandment; they are “unity in the difference.”

- The analysis of Luke 10:25-37 revealed “hermeneutical tools” such as mercy, compassion, recognition, and human dignity that allows us to unveil the virtue of *epikeia* from this parable. These tools allow us to understand how both spirituality and *epikeia* work within parable. Hence, it may be suggested, *splanchnizomai* informs Samaritan’s *epikeia* as well as his being, and then he could love with all his heart, soul, strength, and mind. The Samaritan’s criterion is focused on the restoration of human dignity. The Samaritan fulfills the earthly side of the double love commandment in this context. He shows the spirituality of *mysticism of open eyes* in his commitment with the suffering. Thus, the narrative of the Good Samaritan parable, Metz’s spirituality, and the virtue of *epikeia* “dangerously” inform and shape the Christian character.
- Metz’s spirituality challenges us to practice self-abandonment onto God (*poverty of spirit*), but also launches us to respond to the Other in need with concrete actions (*mysticism of open eyes*) as the Lucan Jesus teaches us through the Good Samaritan parable.
- The analysis of Luke 10:25-37 revealed a paradox. The thesis analyzed this paradox through the lens of categories of *otherness* (salvation from outside) and *affinity* (a salvation from alongside); these categories align with resurrection and the cross respectively and make

possible the experience of human liberation and salvation. Thus, *otherness* and *affinity* allow us to have a better understanding of how salvation takes place in this Lucan parable. The Samaritan and the anonymous man are saved in a dialectical way. The Samaritan reveals some characteristic qualities of Jesus through his actions. He let God be God in favor of that man. The anonymous man, who had been abandoned half-dead was helped by the Samaritan. The encounter between these characters portrays the encounter between the humanity and divinity where love becomes possible salvation. Humanity and divinity need one another to make possible the “miracle” of salvation and redemption in human history. In this encounter the recognition of the Other (God, suffering, poor, non-poor, etc.) in an “I-Thou” relationship on a personal, social and political levels is required. From this encounter salvation emerges for those who are involved in it. Therefore, “love one’s neighbor” is not something different from “love God.” They are the two sides of one coin, or the earthly side and the heavenly side respectively. Nonetheless, they become a single love commandment when encounter takes place between these two sides on the metaphorical Jericho road of our lives; they become a single commandment when one opens one’s eyes to the Other in need.

- The Good Samaritan parable becomes a paradigm of human actions. For Christ’s followers, this parable becomes a model of discipleship where the Other as a subject, must be our hermeneutical criterion. The parable through *epikeia* could be updated creatively in the always here and now situations. We are called to interpret the law according to Jesus’ hermeneutic key, i.e. double commandment of love. Jesus warns us that interpretation of the law according to our actual purity codes could blind us from our ethical tasks. Concerning the virtue of *epikeia*, it is necessary to say that *epikeia* does not operate “alone,” it needs

other virtues such as prudence, charity, and humility to make possible the interpretation of the spirit of the law in our here and now situations.

- The “Form Criticism” analysis of the parable allowed us to have a better understanding of narrative structure and style. The parallelism and chiasmus as well as the meanings of word-pictures had an enormous impact on the original audience of this narrative. It may be noted that the story informs us not only because of its content, but also because of its narrative structure. The “Narrative Criticism” and the “Close Reading” sections complement one another; the latter allows us to approach the original context of this Lucan parable and to have a better understanding of terms such as Samaritan, *splanchnizomai*, and neighbor.
- *Splanchnizomai* occurs twelve times in the synoptic Gospels and mainly describes Jesus’ profound compassion toward humankind; *splanchnizomai* characterizes the divine nature of Jesus’ acts. Nonetheless, there are three exceptions; one of them occurs in the parable of the Good Samaritan where the Lucan Jesus places this verb at the center of the parable and describes the Samaritan’s “heart” by saying “he was moved with pity [*esplanchnison*]” (Lk 10:33). The Lucan Jesus shows through the Samaritan’s actions some characteristic qualities of Jesus, such as his profound compassion toward the multitudes and individual suffering.
- The Good Samaritan parable would work as *dangerous memory* does if we update it in our context. Thus, we can rediscover the power of this narrative and its enormous ethical implications, which in agreement to God’s law should drive us toward acting in favor of human dignity, human liberation, and human realization. In this regard, thinking the virtue of *epikeia* as both the spirit of justice and the interpretation of the spirit of the law might help us to update this Lucan parable by reading and interpreting our concrete situations through the lens of the double love commandment as Jesus does.

- The parable challenges us to be agents of restoring human dignity. In that, we are called to self-abandonment onto God and the Other. “The true lover must be unprotected and give of himself or herself without reservation or question; and must display lifelong fidelity. [...] We must forget ourselves in order let the Other approach to us. We must be able to open up to the other person, to let that person’s distinctive personality unfold.”¹ The Good Samaritan parable teaches that love takes the form of an experience of responsibility for the Other. Thus, love becomes most fully realized when it finds its object in the needs of the half-dead man on the metaphorical Jericho road.
- The story in Luke 10: 25-37 begins with a theological question on the meaning of eternal life and concludes in a concrete expression of mercy on a dangerous road between Jerusalem and Jericho. The Lucan Jesus by saying “go and do likewise” (v. 37b) tells the lawyer, but also tells us that one will inherit eternal life by recognizing the Other as subject and becoming one’s neighbor. In this regard, the virtue of *epikeia* focuses on a higher law, i.e. the human being as the image of God. Metz’s spirituality of *poverty of spirit* reminds us of the importance of self-abandonment onto God’s hands in order to *open our eyes* before the suffering and respond with solidaristic *praxis*, i.e. with concrete human actions, and perhaps, with divine merciful actions as the Good Samaritan did.

¹ Metz, *Poverty of Spirit*, 43-44.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Variants in Luke 10:32

	Participles		
	γενόμενος	ἐλθών	γενόμενος and ἐλθών
Manuscript	Occurs in: P ⁴⁵ A D C E G H K M S U V W Γ Δ Θ Λ; and most minuscules.	Occurs in: P ⁷⁵ N ^c B Ξ C E G H K M S U V W Γ Δ Θ Λ; and many minuscules.	Occurs in: C E G H K M S U V W Γ Δ Θ Λ
	is absent from: P ⁷⁵ N ^c B L X Ξ 0190 f ¹ 28 33 700. [owing to homoeoteleuton N omits the entire verse]	is absent from: P ⁴⁵ D Π 63 68 114 243 253 265 270 482 489 726 990 1200 1219 1375	

Annex 2. Different Translations of Luke 10:32

NRSV ¹	NAU ²	KJV ³	NAB ⁴	N-A ⁵
So likewise	Likewise	And likewise	Likewise	ὁμοίως δὲ και
a Levite	a Levite also,	a Levite,	a Levite	Λευίτης
				[γενόμενος]
when he came to that place	when he came to the place	when he was at the place, came	came to the place,	κατὰ τὸν τόπον ἐλθών
and saw him, passed by on the other side.	and saw him, passed by on the other side.	and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.	and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.	καὶ ἰδὼν ἀντιπαρήλθεν

¹ Bible *New Revised Standard Version*.² Bible *New American Standard Bible*.³ Bible *King James Version*.⁴ Bible *The New American Bible*.⁵ Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*.

Annex 3. Parallel Texts

1. The Lawyer's Question (The Great Commandment)⁶

<u>Matthew 22:34-40</u>	<u>Mark 12:28-34</u>	<u>Luke 10:25-28</u>
<p>³⁴ When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together,</p> <p>³⁵ and one of them, a lawyer,</p> <p>asked him a question</p> <p>to test him.</p> <p>³⁶ “Teacher,</p> <p>which commandment in the law is the greatest?”</p> <p>³⁷ He [Jesus] said to him,</p> <p>“ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’</p>	<p>²⁸ One of <u>the scribes</u></p> <p>came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him,</p> <p>“Which commandment is the first of all?”</p> <p>²⁹ Jesus answered,</p> <p>“The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one;</p> <p>³⁰ you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.”</p>	<p>²⁵ Just then a lawyer</p> <p>stood up</p> <p>to test Jesus.</p> <p>“Teacher,” he said,</p> <p>“what must I do to inherit eternal life?”</p> <p>²⁶ He said to him,</p> <p>“What is written in the law? What do you read there?”</p> <p>²⁷ He [<u>the lawyer</u>] answered,</p> <p>“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind;</p>

⁶ Cf. Kurt Aland ed. *Synopsis of the Four Gospels: Completely Revised on the Basis of the Greek Text of the Nestle-Aland 26th edition and Greek New Testament 3rd edition: The Text is the Second Edition of the Revised Standard Version*, English ed., 1st ed. (New York?: United Bible Societies, 1982), 182-183.

<p>³⁸ This is the greatest and first commandment.</p> <p>³⁹ And a second is like it:</p> <p>‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’</p> <p>⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”</p>	<p>³¹ The second is this,</p> <p>‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’</p> <p>There is no other commandment greater than these.”</p> <p>³² Then the scribe said to him, “You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’;</p> <p>³³ and ‘to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself,’-this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”</p> <p>³⁴ When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” After that no one dared to ask him any question.</p>	<p>and</p> <p>your neighbor as yourself.”</p> <p>²⁸ And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.”</p>
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2. The Parable of the Good Samaritan

<u>Matthew</u>	<u>Mark</u>	<u>Luke 10:29-37</u>
		<p>²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”</p> <p>³⁰ Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.</p> <p>³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.</p>

		<p>³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.</p> <p>³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity.</p> <p>³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.</p> <p>³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.'</p> <p>³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"</p> <p>³⁷ He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."</p>
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Occurs in the synoptic Gospels

Occurs in Mark and Matthew

Occurs in Mark and Luke

Occurs in Matthew and Luke

Annex 4. *Splanchnizomai* in the Synoptic Gospels

Authorized version (NRSV) translates as:

- "have compassion" seven times:
 1. Mt 9:36 (Jesus towards the crowd);
 2. Mt 14:14 (Jesus towards the crowd);
 3. Mt 15:32 (Jesus towards the crowd);
 4. Mk 6:34 (Jesus towards the crowd);
 5. Mk 8:2 (Jesus towards the crowd);
 6. Mk 9:22 (the father of the possessed son to Jesus);
 7. Lk 7:13 (Jesus towards the widow); and
- "be moved with compassion" five times:
 1. Mt 18:27 (the king towards his servant in the parable of the unforgiving servant);
 2. Mt 20:34 (Jesus toward the two blind men);
 3. Mk 1:41 (Jesus toward the leper);
 4. Lk 10:33 (the Samaritan towards the half-dead man in the parable of the Good Samaritan);
 5. Lk 15:20 (the father towards his son in the parable of the prodigal son).

Mt 9:35-38	<p><i>The Harvest Is Great, the Laborers Few</i> (Lk 10.2-3)</p> <p>³⁵ Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he [Jesus] had compassion [<i>splanchnizomai</i>] for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. [...]</p>
Mt 14:13-21	<p><i>Feeding the Five Thousand</i> (Mk 6.30-44; Lk 9.10-17; Jn 6.1-14)</p> <p>¹³ Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he [Jesus] had compassion [<i>splanchnizomai</i>] for them and cured their sick.[...]</p>
Mt 15:32-39.	<p><i>Feeding the Four Thousand</i> (Mk 8.1-10)</p> <p>³² Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion [<i>splanchnizomai</i>] for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way.” [...]</p>
Mt 18:21-35	<p><i>The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant</i></p> <p>[...] ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity [<i>splanchnizomai</i>] for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. [...]</p>
Mt 20:29-34.	<p><i>Jesus Heals Two Blind Men</i> (Mk 10.46-52; Lk 18.35-43)</p> <p>[...] ³¹ The crowd sternly ordered them to be quiet; but they shouted even more loudly, “Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!” ³² Jesus stood still and called them, saying, “What do you want me to do for you?” ³³ They said to him, “Lord, let our eyes be opened.” ³⁴ Moved with compassion [<i>splanchnizomai</i>], Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they regained their sight and followed him.</p>
Mk 1:40-45.	<p><i>Jesus Cleanses a Leper</i> (Mt 8.1-4; Lk 5.12-16)</p> <p>⁴⁰ A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, “If you choose, you can make me clean.” ⁴¹ [Jesus] Moved with pity [<i>splanchnizomai</i>], Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, “I do choose. Be made clean!” ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. [...]</p>
Mk 6:30-44	<p><i>Feeding the Five Thousand</i> (Mt 14.13-21; Lk 9.10-17; Jn 6.1-14)</p> <p>[...] ³⁴ As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he [Jesus] had compassion [<i>splanchnizomai</i>] for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. [...]</p>
Mk 8:1-10	<p><i>Feeding the Four Thousand</i> (Mt 15.32-39)</p> <p>⁸ ¹ In those days when there was again a great crowd without anything to eat, he called his disciples and said to them, ² “I have compassion [<i>splanchnizomai</i>] for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat.[...]</p>

Mk 9:14-29	<p><i>The Healing of a Boy with a Spirit</i> (Mt 17.14-21; Lk 9.37-43a)</p> <p>[...] ²¹ Jesus asked the father, “How long has this been happening to him?” And he said, “From childhood. ²² It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity [splanchnizomai] on us [the father to Jesus] and help us.” ²³ Jesus said to him, “If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes.” [...]</p>
Lk 7:11-17	<p><i>Jesus Raises the Widow's Son at Nain</i></p> <p>[...] ¹² As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. ¹³ When the Lord saw her, he [Jesus] had compassion [splanchnizomai] for her and said to her, “Do not weep.” ¹⁴ Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, “Young man, I say to you, rise!” [...]</p>
Lk 10:25-37	<p><i>The Parable of the Good Samaritan</i> (Mt 22.34-40; Mk 12.28-34)</p> <p>[...] ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he [the Samaritan] was moved with pity [splanchnizomai]. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. [...]</p>
Lk 15:11-32	<p><i>The Parable of the Prodigal and His Brother</i></p> <p>[...] ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ ²⁰ So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and [the father] was filled with compassion [splanchnizomai]; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. ²¹ Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ [...]</p>